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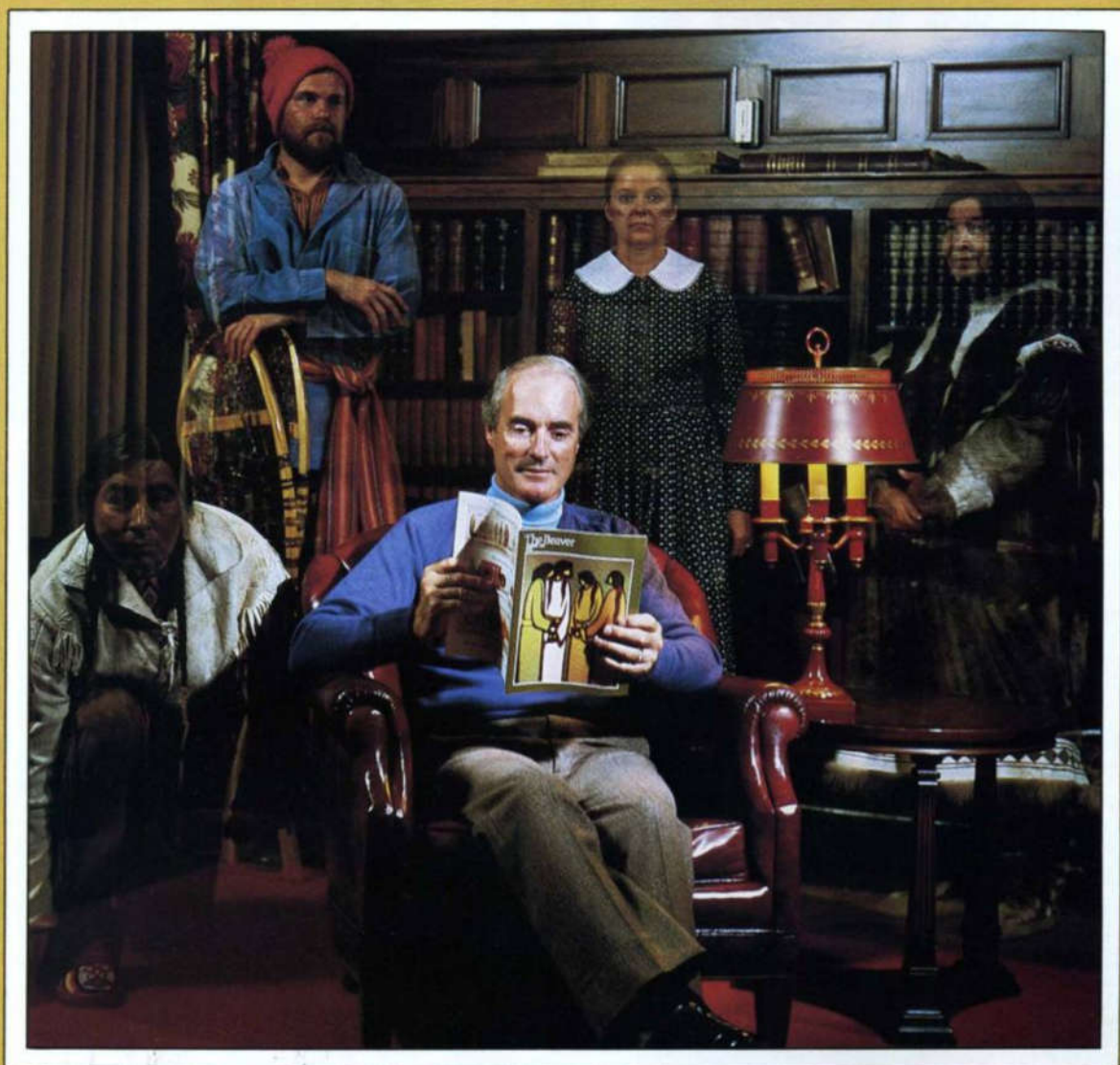
The Beaver

EXPLORING · CANADA'S · HISTORY

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CASHING IN ON THE BOOM

*Stephen Leacock's Remarkable Uncle
Made and Lost His Fortune
On the Canadian Frontier*



By Wendy Owen

He was president of a bank (that never opened), head of a brewery (for brewing the Red River) and, above all, secretary-treasurer of the Winnipeg, Hudson Bay and Arctic Ocean Railway that had a charter authorizing it to build a road to the Arctic Ocean, when it got ready. They had no track, but they printed stationery and passes, and in return "E.P." received passes all over North America.

— Stephen Leacock in
My Remarkable Uncle

In 1941 Stephen Leacock wrote a humorous sketch entitled "My Remarkable Uncle", chronicling the career, mainly in Manitoba, of Edward Philip Leacock, otherwise known as "E.P." Two years later in *Happy Stories* Stephen returned to Uncle E.P. in a sketch called "Boom Times". Here in a preface he recalled the earlier effort. He noted, "I now take the same distinguished actual person and remove him from the cramped environment of truth to the larger atmosphere of fiction," adding, "After the opening page he parts company with his origin, and the people who surround him are, individually, fiction, although, I hope living pictures of the time and place." Many casual readers have undoubtedly assumed that even the earlier characterization of E.P. was largely the invention of his nephew, although more than one Leacock scholar has accepted Stephen's account as giving an accurate rendition of E.P.'s life.

Edward Philip Leacock really did exist and really was Stephen Leacock's uncle. One of the many shadowy figures in the early history of Manitoba, his larger-than-life personality made him a bit of a legend in his own lifetime, although the stories about him died with his contemporaries and the written record is meagre. Stephen's account, even in "the cramped environment of truth" of the first sketch, does not always coincide with the limited documentation available about E.P., although the record suggests that the humourist's efforts did capture the essence of his uncle's personality and activity.

In "My Remarkable Uncle", Stephen Leacock charted the course of an ebullient character who was essentially a parasitical con man but whose nature lacked meanness or viciousness. The sketch opens with E.P.'s arrival at the Leacock family farm in rural Ontario. The general election of 1878 was in progress and E.P. threw himself into electioneering for the Conservatives. This distraction over, E.P. realized that there

were no fortunes to be made in Ontario and persuaded his brother — the author's father — to accompany him to Manitoba, where undoubtedly quick profits could be realised. A sale of farm implements and some of the farm animals provided the wherewithal for the journey. In the ensuing boom in Manitoba, particularly in Winnipeg real estate, both brothers made their fortunes, at least on paper. E.P.'s wealth enabled him to travel to eastern Canada to claim a bride and to return with her to Winnipeg. He and his wife moved into the fine brick house that he was building and where they would entertain lavishly. Following this material success, E.P. became involved in provincial politics and had a great influence on John Norquay, the Conservative premier.

When the inevitable crash came, both E.P. and his brother were affected. Stephen's father was wiped out in a day, but E.P., although effectively bankrupt, carried on for some time before his creditors realised that his glowing promises had indeed become worthless. All faith was lost in E.P.'s promotions — a bank, a brewery, and the railway which was to run to the Arctic Ocean. Journeys to the east on free railway passes were no longer possible. The death of Sir John A. Macdonald did, however, result in one last free journey to eastern Canada. Down on his luck, an old and broken E.P. was repatriated to England by his family. Living there on a pittance, E.P.'s luck had a final twist. He became the business manager of a nearby monastery, leading it to prosperity by the same tactics that had earlier worked in Manitoba. The result of this success was a comfortable, even luxurious life for E.P., with all creature comforts. In their last meeting, E.P. informed his nephew, "I will send a chauffeur with a car and two lay brothers to bring you down."

In "Boom Times" Leacock provided further and more exaggerated illustrations of E.P.'s tactics in politics and business, most of them purportedly fictional.

Stephen was clearly ambivalent about Uncle Edward. He was on the one hand a more extreme version of Stephen's own father, who had abandoned his family in search of what Stephen called, in the subtitle to "Boom Times", "The Mirage of a Better World". Moreover, he had led the elder Leacock astray. On the other hand, E.P.'s assumption of the status of an English gentleman and the use of that status to take advantage of gullible Canadians fit perfectly into Stephen's general cynical view of Canadians so effectively employed in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* and *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*. The bigger the lie, the more likely it was to be believed. All one needed was serene self-confidence, an air of total plausibility, and eternal optimism. All these attributes E.P. unquestionably enjoyed, and Stephen had a sneaking admiration for them.

The "historical" Edward Philip Leacock was born on 28 December 1853 at St. Helen's, Isle of Wight, England, the youngest son of Thomas Murdock Leacock. Unlike his nephew Stephen — who tended to exaggerate the poverty and humbleness of his background and upbringing — E.P. stressed his family's status. His entry in the *Canadian Parliamentary Companion*, doubtless self-written, made much of his supposed noble descent from a Countess of Salisbury. The connection with nobility may have been tenuous, but E.P. was undoubtedly the grandson of a man who had made his fortune in the wine trade and the Madeira plantations he had acquired. E.P. conveniently ignored the fact that his family's position originated in "trade", but he claimed education at Old Hall, Hertfordshire, and completed it at the University of Geneva, whence he received his B.A. in 1873. What he did between 1873 and his arrival in Canada in 1878 is not clear, although it is likely that he received some legal training, probably on the Isle of Wight, and he travelled in the Mediterranean. Nor is it clear why he came to Canada. He did not come to farm, as had his elder brother Walter Peter in 1876. Whether Thomas Leacock had packed E.P. off to the colonies, as he had his elder son, is not known. However, Leacock senior did not provide his youngest son with a farm in advance, as he had done for W.P. Leacock and his family near the village of Sutton on Lake Simcoe.

To Stephen and his siblings E.P. burst onto the scene rather like a meteor. In the opening pages of "Boom Times" Stephen describes the isolation of the farm, continuing:

Into this isolation broke Edward Philip. He had just come from a year's travel round the Mediterranean, a man of twenty-eight or thirty, but seemed a more than adult man, bronzed and self-confident, with a square beard like a Plantagenet king. He arrived in the dusk of a late summer evening in a two-horse wagon, filled with English portmanteaus and bun-



E.P. Leacock in his prime.

dles of double-barreled guns, fishing rods and malacca canes — things that he called his "kit."

A contemporary photograph of E.P. confirms his nephew's description of his physical appearance. While the Leacock children were much impressed, E.P.'s own account of his arrival was rather more mundane and laconic: "When I first went to Canada (Ontario) I dabbled in store keeping to see if I could sling tea; not my number."

Whether E.P.'s entrance into Canadian politics was as dramatic as Stephen suggested seems unlikely, but E.P. did acquire some connection with Alexander Morris, a former lieutenant-governor of Manitoba. At the end of his term of office Morris had returned to political life in Ontario as a member of the Ontario legislature for Toronto East 1876-1886, and the logical place for him to meet and be impressed by the young E.P. was on the hustings. In any event, according to E.P. himself, "Alexander Morris, a former governor of Manitoba took me under his wing as a sort of attaché." When E.P. arrived in Winnipeg in June of 1879, he immediately became a clerk at the Dominion Land Office, a post usually acquired through political patronage. His fluency in French was doubtless an

There is something of magic appeal in the rush and movement of a "boom" town — a Winnipeg of the 80's, a Carson City of the 60's. . . . Life comes to a focus; it is all here and now, all *present*, no past and no outside — just a clatter of hammers and saws, rounds of drinks and rolls of money. In such an atmosphere every man seems a remarkable fellow, a man of exception; individuality separates out and character blossoms like a rose.

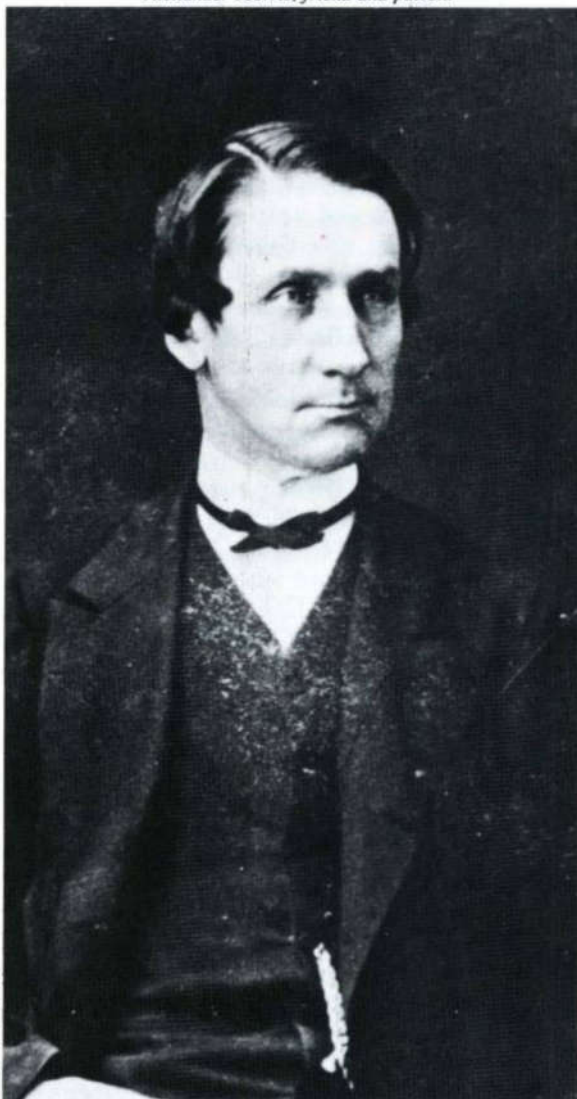
— Stephen Leacock in
My Remarkable Uncle

advantage. One of E.P.'s colleagues at the Land Office was W.H. Disbrowe, who later became briefly associated with Stephen Leacock's father in a Winnipeg real estate company called Disbrowe, Leacock and Co.

In April 1880, less than a year after his arrival in the province, E.P. was appointed a justice of the peace. A year later he travelled east and returned with a bride, Georgiana Eliza Vickers, eldest daughter of John J. Vickers of Toronto and the granddaughter of Susanna Moodie. It is possible that the couple first met on the Mediterranean. Before his marriage E.P. boarded in one of the Winnipeg hotels, but he soon acquired a cottage two miles from Winnipeg for \$1,200, for which he was subsequently offered \$20,000 cash. The windfall would finance more grandiose residential accommodations.

E.P. appears to have entered very quickly into the social, business, and political life of the province, not unusual in that boom period. By 1881 he was no longer employed at the Dominion Land Office, but had a plethora of other positions. He was a director and secretary-treasurer of the Westbourne and North West Railway Company, the vice-president of which was A.W. Ross, a real estate promoter and politician; C.P. Brown, another promoter and political figure, later a Manitoba cabinet minister, was among the other directors. E.P. was also director and secretary-treasurer of the Manitoba Drainage Company, with G. Brown and A.W. Ross. In addition he was a director of the Canadian Pacific Express Company with C.P. Brown and J.C. Schultz. A founding member of the Selkirk Club, of which Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper were honorary members, E.P. in 1881 became secretary of the club. He was also a member of the St. George's Snowshoe Club, an important social organization in the Winnipeg of the early 1880s.

Alexander Morris, friend and patron.





The men of the St. George's Snowshoe Club face the elements.

E.P. spent the money he was ostensibly making as freely as he was earning it. He was reputed to drive a finer turnout — complete with coachman and footmen — than C.J. Brydges of the Hudson's Bay Company, the "social lion of the day". In 1882 he began construction of a large brick house on a river lot in Kildonan. The house, valued at \$100,000 had twenty-three rooms and was lavishly appointed and furnished. The possession of this Kildonan estate, with its 330 feet of river frontage; his office as Warden of Kildonan; and his seat on the bench as a justice of the peace, undoubtedly reflected E.P.'s ambition to replicate in Manitoba the status of an English country gentleman. He entertained lavishly in his new home, always ensuring that the Mumms Extra was served at 38 degrees Fahrenheit.

Even before his Kildonan efforts, E.P. had used ostentatious residential building as an entrée into provincial politics in rural Manitoba. In 1881 Manitoba's boundaries were extended westward, creating a new electoral division. On 5 July 1881 the first political meeting for the new Shoal Lake and Russell division was held in Birtle. At this meeting J.S. Crerar was suggested as the area's first representative in the Manitoba legislature. When Crerar refused to stand, another meeting was held at Birtle Town Hall on 26 July 1881, where E.P. Leacock "announced Birtle citizenship" and offered himself as a prospective candidate. Three days later, J.A. Johnson, a Winnipeg contractor, began the construction of a house for E.P. on the north hill at Birtle, which became known as "the Castle". When the election was held on 26 November 1881, E.P. ran as the Conservative candidate against Stephen Clement, a local farmer and staunch Liberal. Clement won. However, his seat became vacant a few months later, and at the August 1882 by-election E.P. took his seat with a 175 majority over J.S. Crawford. Leacock would

repay his supporters by ensuring in 1886 that the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway lay its track through Birtle instead of Seaburn-Russell.

By 1882 the Westbourne and North West Railway Company had become the Portage, Westbourne and North West Railway Company. E.P. remained as secretary but there was a new president — D. McArthur, and a new managing director — the Honourable C.P. Brown, now Minister of Public Works in the Norquay government. The company was later sold to the Allan family of Montreal, who operated it as the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway. E.P. developed some business interests in his riding, including a share in a lumber company and the vice-presidency of the Birtle Farming Company.

E.P., like most of the province, must have suffered when the Manitoba boom ended in 1882. According to his nephew, his uncle's financial failure was total, disguised for a time only by E.P.'s bravado. If E.P. were effectively bankrupted and carrying on one step ahead of his creditors, he certainly managed to survive for a considerable time. More likely, the process of financial deterioration was a gradual one which allowed Leacock some room to continue to operate. E.P. seems to have given up the Kildonan mansion, but the house in Birtle was by all accounts quite palatial, and he continued to entertain there lavishly until 1886. He also remained a member of the Manitoba legislature, residing in St. Boniface as well as in his riding.

In 1886 Leacock's constituency was divided into two separate ridings of Shoal Lake and Russell. E.P. chose to stand for Russell in the next general election, and in preparation for this contest he moved his family from Birtle to Russell in August 1886, shortly after entertaining Sir John A. and Lady Macdonald in Birtle. In the election of December 1886 E.P. was returned for Russell. The secret ballot was used for the first

time in this election and most seats, including Leacock's, produced contested results. He was confirmed, however, as the rightful member against the petition of James Fisher.

A loyal Conservative and a supposed close friend of Premier Norquay, E.P. never held cabinet office during his period in the legislature, although his party was always in the majority. He was, however, chairman of the legislature's Conservative caucus, and it was rumoured that he would become Speaker in the new session opened in 1887. The honour went to another. Although E.P. could not appear at the opening of the legislature in April 1887 resplendent in the Speaker's robes, his turnout was nevertheless worthy of note. "Russell is putting on the style," reported *The Birtle Observer*, "Mr. Leacock, member for that county, attended the opening of the house sporting a new black hat of elegant gloss and genteel finish." E.P.'s failure to move beyond the status of backbencher suggests that, despite his charm and connections, he was regarded with some suspicion by the party leadership. As of the beginning of the 1887 session, the problem was not political fractiousness, for E.P. had been and remained in the 1887 session a loyal supporter of the government.

The question dominating the 1887 session was one combining railway construction and provincial rights. The Manitoba government was caught between the needs of a growing province and the pressure of a federal government attempting to build a nation. Despite federal disallowance of its provincial charter, which made financing difficult, the Red River Valley Railway, to run from Winnipeg to the American border, was fully supported by the provincial government. The need for financing brought the Hudson Bay Railway, an amalgamation of two earlier companies which had come together in 1884 with the aid of E.P., into the picture.



Manitoba Archives

Premier Norquay: Exposed.

Stephen Leacock had much fun in his sketches of E.P. with the railroad to Hudson Bay, obviously part of his uncle's promotional excesses, but quite apart from the implication that the railway had been projected during the Winnipeg boom — a conflation of dates — Stephen was also wrong to treat the scheme with total levity.

The Hudson Bay Railway had received its federal charter in 1885 and had begun in 1886 to build north-westward from Winnipeg. Under the terms of its charter the company was to hand over its land grant (the land received for laying down track) to the province. By 1887 the company had in fact put down forty

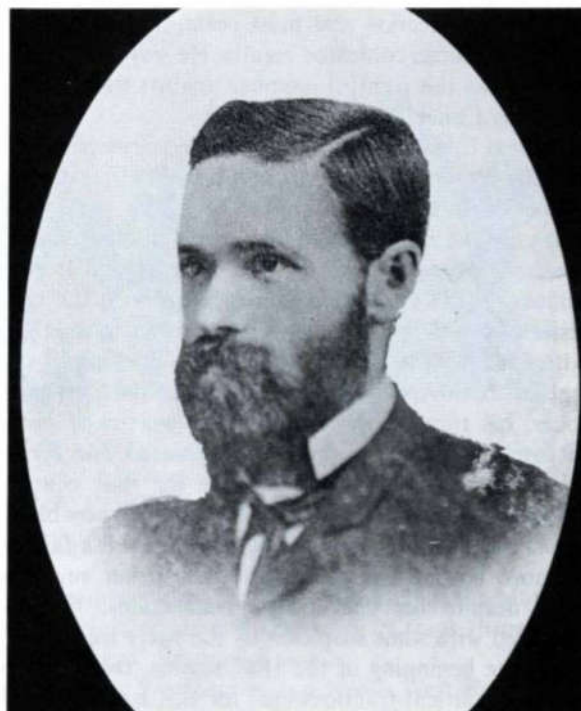
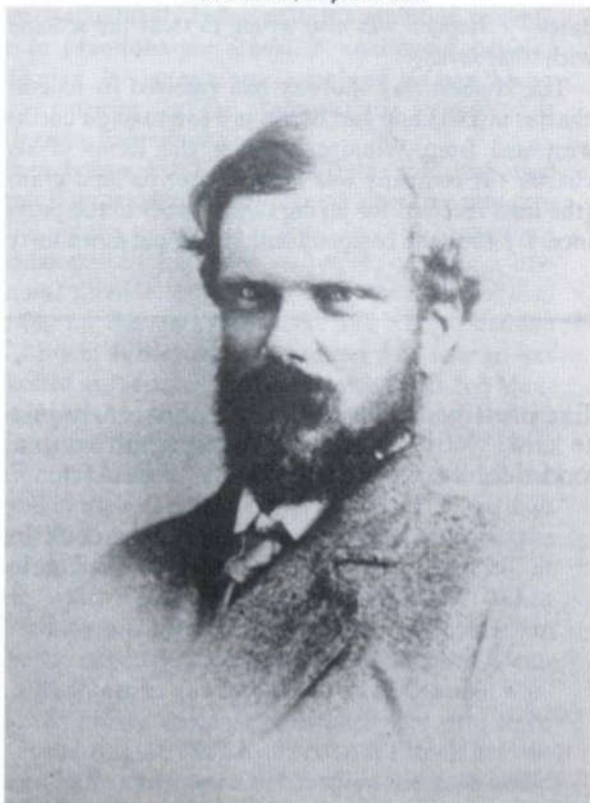
To aristocracy E. P. also added a touch of peculiar prestige by always being apparently just about to be called away — imperially. If some one said, "Will you be in Winnipeg all winter, Mr. Leacock?" he answered, "It will depend a good deal on what happens in West Africa." Just that; West Africa beat them.

— Stephen Leacock in
My Remarkable Uncle

miles of track and was entitled to 256,000 acres from the federal government. Once this land was transferred, the Manitoba government would use it for security to issue bonds for the Red River Valley Railway. The provincial treasurer was assured by Sir John A. Macdonald that the land transfer would be made. But after the province had issued the bonds Macdonald reneged on his assurances and the land was not transferred, meaning that the bonds had been issued unsecured. This sort of promotionalism was, of course, exactly what Stephen Leacock imputed to his uncle.

Interestingly enough, E.P. was the person who made public the news that the province had issued unsecured bonds, in a petition to the lieutenant-governor asking that the legislature be convened to deal with the matter. The petition was simultaneously printed in the *Free Press* and the *Morning Call* on 28 November 1887, and was not regarded by the government as a friendly gesture. Why E.P. exposed his party in this way is not really clear. Despite his active and vocal support of the administration in the spring of 1887 there had during the autumn been rumours of his disaffection with the Norquay government. E.P.'s breaking of ranks was evidently not entirely unexpected. "It has been rumoured for 2 weeks that Leacock was going to withdraw support from the government," reported the *Morning Call*, and the *Birtle Eyewitness* suggested that E.P. had, along with C.P. Brown, become disaf-

W.P. Leacock, Stephen's dad.



C.P. Brown, Leacock crony.

ected by the French Catholic and halfbreed influence upon the Norquay regime. This interpretation seems an unlikely one to explain the actions of a man whose home address was Taché Avenue, St. Boniface, who was fluent in French, and whose mother had converted to Catholicism and taken her children into the church with her. At the end of his life E.P. said that "his sympathies were not really for provincial rights in the eighties — but on the side of the big corporations closely allied with bigger government at Ottawa." Perhaps. A more likely explanation was that E.P. had been appointed land commissioner of the Hudson Bay Railway Company in June of 1887, and legitimately felt that the behaviour of the two governments had endangered his position. In any event, the entire episode calls his nephew's account into question.

In the election of 1888 E.P. did not retain his seat in the face of the sweep by the Greenway Liberals. He continued working on behalf of the Hudson Bay Railway, however, and attempted to break into federal politics. In a letter to Sir John A. he suggested himself as the Conservative candidate in the Provencher seat. He felt his stand on provincial rights and the railroad bonds would not offend many voters (or the Tory government in Ottawa), but Macdonald obviously disagreed and failed to act on the suggestion.

Despite the loss of his seat and return to private life, railroads continued to be important to E.P. In 1888 he was called out as justice of the peace by the Canadian Pacific Railway to prevent damage to company prop-

In all his interviews E. P. could fashion his talk to his audience. On one of his appearances I introduced him to a group of college friends, young men near to degrees, to whom degrees mean everything. In casual conversation E. P. turned to me and said, "Oh, by the way you'll be glad to know that I've just received my honorary degree from the Vatican — at last!" The "at last" was a knock-out — a degree from the Pope, and overdue at that!

— Stephen Leacock in
My Remarkable Uncle

erty by the province in a dispute over a crossing. E.P. issued a requisition for troops in military district 10 to assist him in this endeavour, while Attorney-general Joseph Martin, a long-time foe of E.P., was arranging for the swearing in of 300 special constables to support the provincial position. In the end, nothing happened.

In the 1891 federal election E.P. was the central organizer (with C.A. Burrows) for the Conservative party in the province of Manitoba and the territories. Both men had unsuccessfully put themselves forward for the wardenship at Stony Mountain Penitentiary in 1889, and were obviously looking to be rewarded for their political loyalty when the Tories swept back into power. Despite several efforts, however, E.P. failed to receive a patronage position from either the provincial or federal governments, and the credibility problems chronicled by his nephew appear to have rapidly accelerated. E.P. remained in St. Boniface until 1894. By this time his wife had died and their two children (Thomas Murdock, born 1882 and Ela Mary Moodie, born 1884) had gone off to live with their maternal grandparents in Toronto; Ela would become one of the first female graduates from the University of Toronto. The death of E.P.'s father in 1888 had eventually resulted in some "expectations" for his youngest son, and E.P. returned alone to England in 1894. He died in his home, called "Minnedosa", in Maldon in 1927. He had obviously resided in Maldon

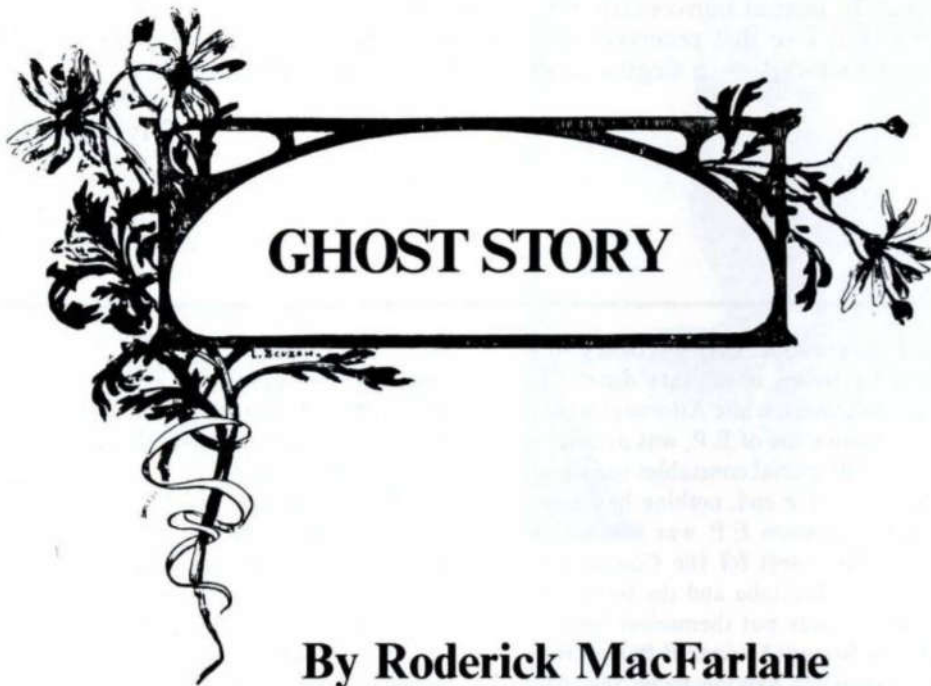
as "Colonel Leacock," since his death certificate described his occupation as a retired colonel in the North West Mounted Police. Although nephew Stephen did not always have his facts right, he had the measure of the man.

E.P. Leacock was, in life and fiction, the archetypal Englishman in the colonies. If he was not a remittance man; he had "expectations". In Manitoba he assumed that he was entitled to be important and influential, and his attempt to replicate the lifestyle of an English country gentleman in his new prairie environment took him a long way. E.P. had not only political and social pretensions, but commercial and financial ones as well. Like others of his time and place, he was a "boomer", although his business ventures were not quite as ephemeral as his nephew Stephen would have them. In a new province initially peopled largely by mixed bloods, Leacock was a "privileged settler", and he always took his privileges for granted. Although not entirely the unprincipled promoter painted by his nephew, E.P. in Manitoba does illustrate the extent to which men with self-confidence (a quality bred into upper-class Englishmen) could flourish at least temporarily amidst the process of colonial settlement. ♦

Wendy Owen recently edited The Wheat King: Selected Letters and Papers of A.J. Cotton, 1888-1913, a publication of the Manitoba Record Society.

If there is a paradise, I am sure he will get in. He will say at the gate — "Peter? Then surely you must be a relative of Lord Peter of Tichfield?"

— Stephen Leacock in
My Remarkable Uncle



**A voice in the storm
chilled the blood. . . .**



The Phantom Hunter by Blair Bruce.

On the fifteenth day of March 1853, Augustus Richard Peers, a fur trader and post manager in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, departed this life at Fort McPherson, Peel's river, in the Mackenzie River District, Arctic America. Although he had occasionally complained of ill health, his death after a few days' sickness at the comparatively early age of thirty-three years was entirely unexpected. He was of Anglo-Irish origin, an able officer, much esteemed by his friends and popular among the Indians. During a residence of, I think, eleven years in that remote district, he had been stationed for two or three Outfit seasons at "Head-quarters," Fort Simpson, and afterwards at Forts Norman and McPherson. In 1849, Mr. Peers was married to the eldest daughter of the late Chief Trader John Bell of the Hudson's Bay Company. They had two children. In 1855 the widow married the late Alexander McKenzie, who succeeded Mr. Peers at Fort McPherson.

While a resident of both Norman and McPherson, the deceased had been heard to express a strong dislike, in the event of his death, that his bones should rest at either spot. Mr. Peers was thought to have made a holograph will some time previous to his demise; but if so, he must have mislaid or destroyed it, as no such document ever turned up.

Having entered the service of the Company in 1852, I was appointed to the Mackenzie River District the following year, and reached Fort Simpson five months after Mr. Peers' death, where I met his widow and infant children. In the autumn of 1859, at the urgent request of Mrs. McKenzie and her husband, it was decided that the long contemplated transfer of the remains of Mr. Peers from their place of interment at Peel's River to Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie, should be carried out that winter. Mr. Charles P. (now Chief Trader) Gaudet, then in charge of Fort McPherson, agreed to convey the body by dog train to my trade post at Fort Good Hope, a distance of three hundred



Roderick MacFarlane: *Something uncanny.*

miles, while I undertook to render it at its final destination, some five hundred miles further south.

Fort McPherson is situated about one degree north of the Arctic Circle. The soil in its neighbourhood is marshy, and frost is ever present at a shallow depth beneath the surface. On being exhumed by Mr. Gaudet, the body was found in much the same condition it had assumed shortly after its burial. It was then removed from the original coffin, and placed in a new and unnecessarily large coffin which, secured by a moose skin wrapper and lines on a Hudson's Bay dog sled or train, made it an extremely awkward and difficult load for men and dogs to haul and conduct over the rugged masses of tossed-up ice which annually occur at intervals along the mighty Mackenzie river, especially in the higher and more rapid portion of its course towards the northern ocean.

On the first day of March, 1860, Mr. Gaudet arrived at Good Hope and delivered up the body to my care, and I set out for Fort Simpson. The coffin was fixed on one team or train of three dogs conducted by an Iroquois Indian from Caughnawaga, near Montreal, named Michel Thomas (since deceased), while the second train carried our bedding, voyaging utensils and provisions. I myself led the march on snowshoes, and after seven days of very hard and trying labour, owing to the unusual depth of the snow and much rugged ice, the first two hundred miles of our journey to the nearest point (Fort Norman) from Good Hope, was successfully accomplished. At this place Mr. Nicol

Taylor (now deceased) strongly pointed out that unless the coffin was removed, and the body properly secured on the train, it would be almost impossible to travel over the vast masses of tossed-up ice which were sure to be encountered at certain points between here and Fort Simpson. As I had previously gone twice over the ground in winter, and had already had some experience of *bourdions*, I acted on his advice, and we had subsequently good reason for congratulation on having done so.

After one day's rest at Norman, we started on the last and longest portion of the journey. There was no intervening station at that time, and we met few Indians. The Iroquois Thomas remained with the body train. The baggage train and man from Good Hope were exchanged at Norman for fresh animals and a new driver named Michel Iroquois. Mr. Taylor also assisted me in beating the track for the party, he having volunteered to accompany the remains of his former master and friend, Mr. Peers.

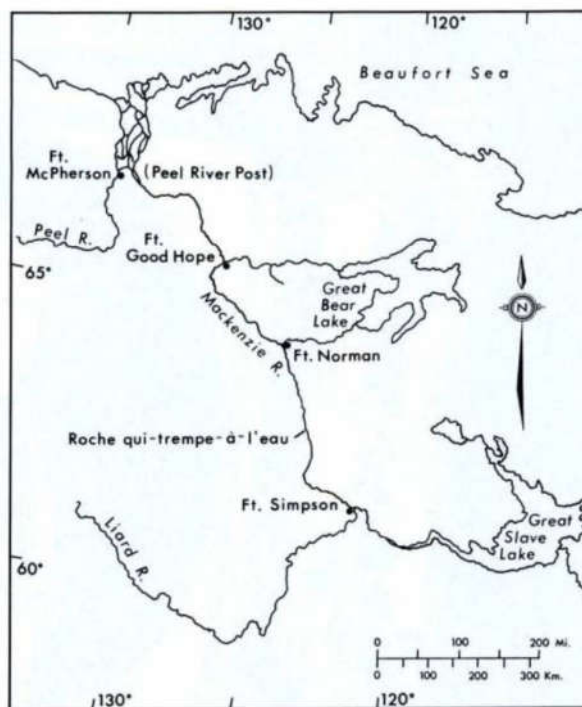
A full description of winter travelling in this country may be learned from the pages of Franklin, Back, Richardson and Butler. Here it may be briefly stated that we got under way by four o'clock in the morning; dined at some convenient spot about noon, and after an hour's rest, resumed our march until sunset, when we laid up for the night, generally in a pine bluff on the top or close to the immediate bank of the river. Clearing away the snow to the ground for a space of about ten feet square, cutting and carrying pine brush for carpeting the camp and collecting firewood for cooking and warming up purposes, usually occupied us for about an hour. Another hour would see supper over and the dogs fed, and by the end of the next sixty or more minutes, most of the party would be sound asleep. Except on two occasions to be presently mentioned, the train carrying the body of the deceased was invariably hauled up and placed for the night in the immediate rear of our encampment, and except also on the first of the said occasions, our dogs never exhibited any desire to get at same, nor did they seem in the slightest degree affected by its presence in our midst.

About sunset on the fifteenth day of March, 1860, the seventh anniversary of poor Peers' death, we were obliged to encamp at a short distance above *Roche qui trempe a l'eau*, the rock by the riverside of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, as there was no better place within easy reach. The banks here were high, rocky and steep, and we had to leave both trains on the ice; we experienced much difficulty in scrambling up the bank with our axes, snowshoes, bedding and provisions for supper and breakfast. The dogs were unharnessed and remained below, while the weather was calm and comparatively fine and mild. The bank rose about thirty feet to the summit where, on a shelving flat some thirty

feet beyond, we selected a position for the night. All hands then set about making the camp, cutting and carrying the requisite supply of pine brush and firewood.

After being thus busily employed for ten or twelve minutes, the dogs began to bark and we at once concluded that Indians were approaching us, as this was a part of the river where a few were frequently met with. We, however, continued our work, the dogs still barking, though not so loudly or fiercely as they usually do under similar circumstances. Neither the dogs nor sleds were visible from the camp, but only from the summit of the river bank. While talking with Mr. Taylor about the expected Indians, we all distinctly heard the word "Marche!" (I may remark that French terms are almost universally applied to hauling dogs and their work in the Northwest Territories of Canada.) It seemed to have been uttered by someone at the foot of the bank who wished to drive away the dogs in his path, and we all left off work in order to see who the stranger was; but as no one appeared in sight, Michel Thomas and myself proceeded to the aforesaid summit, where, to our astonishment, no man was visible, while the dogs were seen surrounding the body train at a distance of several feet, and still apparently excited at something. We had to call them repeatedly before they gave up barking, but after a few minutes they desisted and then somehow managed to ascend the bank to our encampment, where they remained perfectly quiet for the night, and thereafter continued as indifferent as before in respect to the deceased's body.

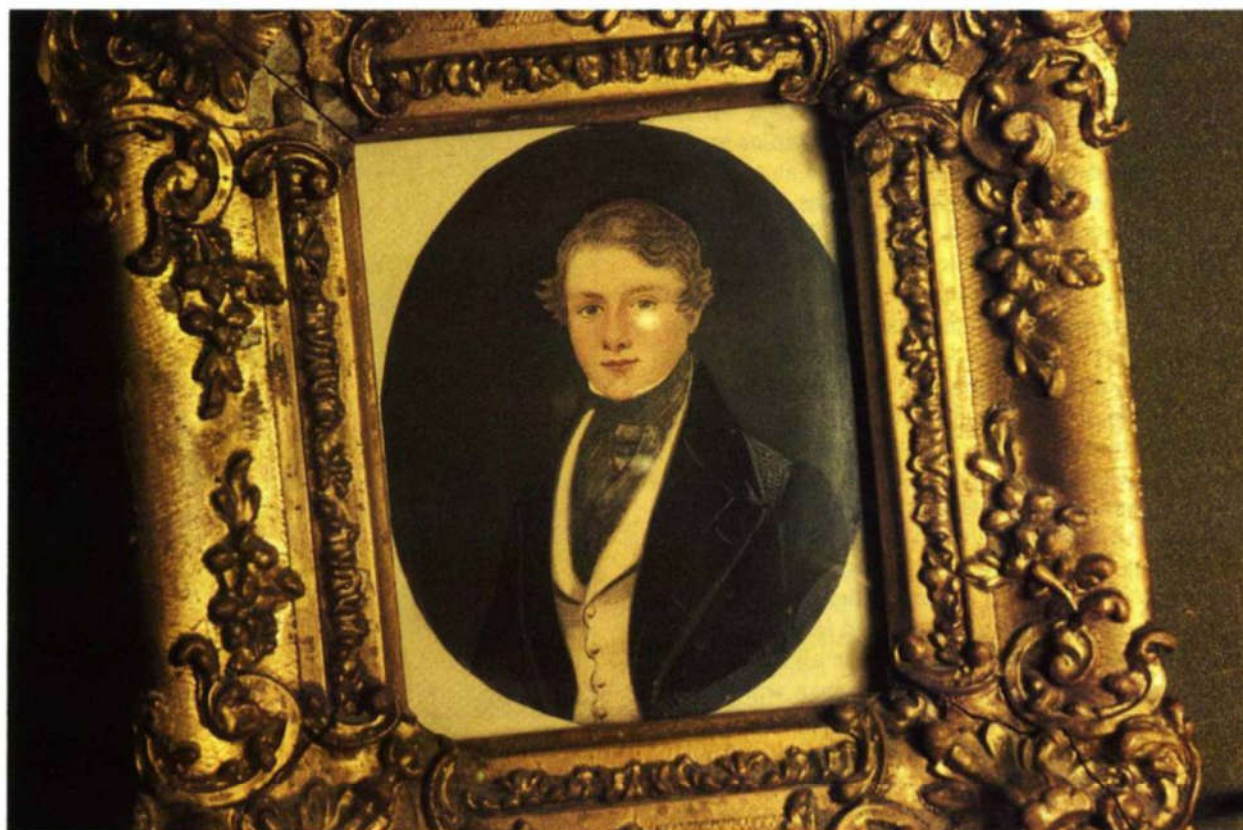
It struck me at the time I heard it that the word *marche* was enunciated in a clearer manner than I had ever before known an Indian to do so, as they seldom get beyond a *mashe* or *masse* pronunciation of the term.



On the eighteenth day of March we were compelled to travel two hours after dark in order to find a suitable encampment, and although we discovered a tolerably good place near the head of a large island on the Mackenzie, yet it was not an easy matter to ascend a perpendicular bank of some twelve feet in height. The baggage train being now rather light, by tying a line to the foremost dog, we managed to drag it and them to the top. The same plan answered with the dogs of the body train; but we considered it beyond our power

Roche qui trempe à l'eau.





Collection of H.C. Philbrick

Augustus Richard Peers in youth.

to get it up, and we were therefore reluctantly obliged to leave it below. After cutting a trail through thick willows for about thirty or forty yards, we reached the edge of a dense forest of small spruce, where we camped. The customary operations were at once attended to, and when most of the work was over I turned up with some firewood from a distance where I had been collecting a lot for the night.

Mr. Taylor then asked me if I had heard a very loud call or yell twice repeated from the direction of the river.

I said "No," as my cap ear protectors were closely tied down owing to the cold wind, and the thicket very dense.

The two Iroquois corroborated Mr. Taylor's statement, but to settle the matter and find out if any Indian had followed our tracks, we all proceeded to the bank, where nothing could be seen or heard, and we at once decided on having the body train hauled up by sheer force, and it proved a tough job to do so.

We remembered our experience of the fifteenth of March, and when we set out early next morning we had reason to congratulate ourselves on taking this trouble, as on reaching the spot from which we had removed the body train, we discovered that a *carcajou* or wolverine had been there during the night. To those

who know the power of this destructive animal, I need not say that he would have played havoc with the aforesaid remains.

Fort Simpson was at length reached without a recurrence of anything of an unusual nature, in the forenoon of the twenty-first of March, and the body was duly buried in the adjacent graveyard on the twenty-third of that month. Shortly after my arrival, Mr. Taylor and I recounted everything to Chief Trader Bernard R. Ross (since deceased), the district manager, who had been an intimate friend and countryman of Mr. Peers. Mr. Ross was a good mimic and had an excellent memory. He was asked to utter the word *marche* in the voice of the deceased, and while I at once recognized the tone as similar to that heard by us at our encampment of the fifteenth of March, Mr. Taylor had no doubt whatever on the subject.

During my stay at Fort Simpson, I occupied a shake-down bed in the same room with Mr. Ross, and at a distance from his of some eight or ten feet. On the first or second night after retiring and extinguishing the candle light, while conversing on the subject of the rather remarkable occurrences narrated herein (including the supposed disappearance of his will) relating to the deceased, I became overpoweringly conscious of what struck me then and since to have been



Bernard R. Ross: *Horror in the night.*

the spiritual or supernatural presence of the late Mr. Peers. The feeling, however, came on so very suddenly and scaringly that I instantly covered my face with the blanket and remained speechless. After an interval of perhaps only a few seconds Mr. Ross (whose voice had also ceased) in a somewhat excited tone asked me if I had experienced a very peculiar sensation. I answered that I had and described the feeling, which he assured me agreed exactly with what he himself had just undergone. I know from experience what nightmare is; but while it is most unlikely that two individuals who were carrying on a conversation in which they felt a deep interest should be thus attacked simultaneously, it may be stated that neither of us had partaken of any wines, spirits or anything else which could have brought on a nightmare.

I leave it to others, if they can, to give a reasonable account or explanation of the facts I have here stated; but if it be assumed as an axiom that the spirits of some of the dead are occasionally permitted to revisit former scenes and to take more or less interest in their discarded bodies, then from what we have incidentally learned of the late Mr. Peers' sentiments in respect to the final disposition of his remains, what other or more natural course would the spirit of such a man be expected to take with the view of preventing any

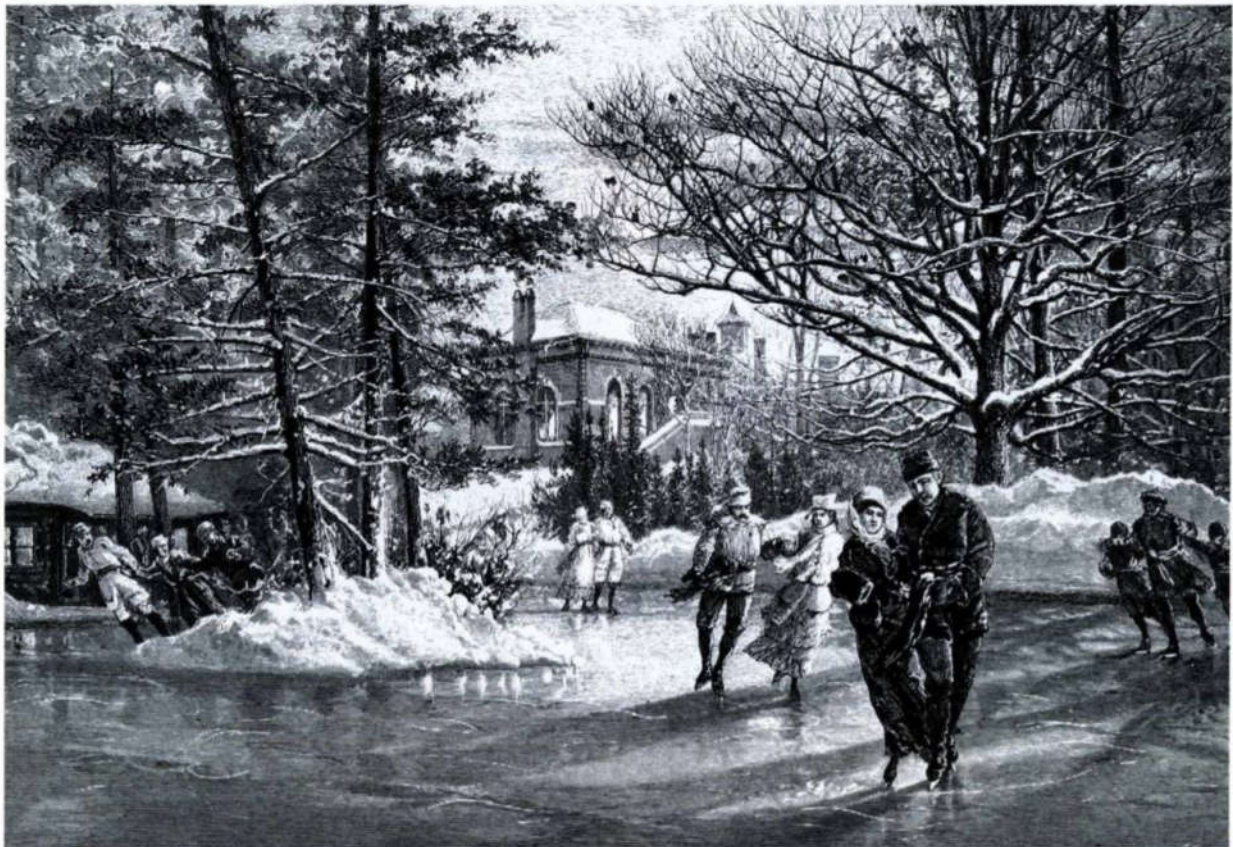
unnecessary desecration of them than that apparently adopted on the nights of the fifteenth and eighteenth of March, 1860?

From the position of our camp of the fifteenth of March, it may be taken for granted that it was almost impossible to have hauled the body train up such a steep and rugged rocky bank. Dogs are invariably hungry at the end of a long day's travel and, as the weather was fine that day, they may have scented the still fresh and perfect remains, and probably desired to get at them, while their barking at and position around the sled would, on any other hypothesis, be at least equally strange and unaccountable. Of course, there was danger from wolves and wolverines, but it is presumed that spirits know more than mortals. On the night of March eighteenth, however, although the bank was very difficult of ascent (to get up one had first to raise and push a man till he laid hold of the root of a stout willow by which he hoisted himself to the top, and then threw us a line which aided the rest) it was not insurmountable; and as a most vicious and destructive animal actually visited the spot where we intended leaving the body train for the night, but for the calls and yells referred to, I again ask what other course than that mentioned would any man or spirit possessed of future knowledge be likely to take? And as to the extraordinary feeling experienced by Mr. Ross and myself at the moment when we were talking about the deceased and his supposed will, if it be possible for spirits to communicate with mortals, might this not have arisen (as I actually felt at the time) from a desire on his part to convey some information to us who evinced so deep an interest in the matter but which, from losing our presence of mind, we missed the opportunity of ascertaining?

The foregoing facts made so indelible an impression on my mind that I firmly believe that my present account of them does not in any material point differ from what I communicated to Mr. Ross at the time, and repeatedly since to others. I also distinctly remember the occasion on which I gave similar details to General Sir William F. (then Captain) Butler, K.C.B. It was at Green Lake post, North-West Territory, in the month of February 1873. Captain Butler soon after proceeded to Ashanti, where he experienced a very severe attack of illness, and he, moreover, wrote me that he had taken poetical license with my narrative, and this will naturally account for the discrepancies between the statements I have given in this paper and his story of same in *Good Words* for 1877. ♦

Roderick MacFarlane, F.R.G.S. was a fur trader for over forty years. He established Fort Smith in 1874 and at his instigation the first steamship for travel on the Mackenzie River was built in 1886. This factual account of his strange experience was written in 1883 in reply to an inquiry made by More Adey of Oxford University. He died in 1920.

Christmas at Rideau Hall



A vice-regal skating party at Rideau Hall, late nineteenth century. From Picturesque Canada, Vol. I, 1882.

Christmas Day. — Thermometer 20° below zero. Proprieties out of the question — must go to church in sealskin turbans, and must undress when we get there, as we sit near the stove; so that when we leave, the amount of things to be put on is frightful. There are my cloak, and my cloud, fur gauntlets, and woolen cuffs, there are Archie's coat, and his cloud, and turban, and gloves. Then Fred and D. have to be clothed; happily, every one in the church is equally busy muffling up. D., you will be surprised to hear, wears absolutely less than he used to do in May at home, and scarcely seems to feel the cold at all. Fred, too, bears it well, with the exception of his ears, about which he is decidedly nervous. He is always feeling them and inquiring from passers-by whether they are frozen. The children play in the snow as if it were hay, and enjoy themselves immensely. Their nurse, Mrs. Hall, dislikes the wrapping up, but has been consoled by a present of a pair of skates. Their governess is learning too; she won't wrap up, and I really fear some accident for her: nothing but a frostbite will make her careful.

We have arranged a Christmas tree, and this evening all the children of the family assembled for it. They came at five, and the nine of them, with their governesses and nurses, were ushered into the room with great ceremony. Hermie rushed at a doll. 'There is my doll,' and kissed it most fervently. Of course they all got various presents, and the big ones dined with us, and afterward played blind man's buff, snapdragon, etc., etc.

The pictures have arrived, and are a great improvement to the house. In my room I have drawings of Killyleagh and Clandeboyne, and there are a few oil-portraits in the dining room, which make it look homelike. We shall be quite sorry to go away next week, to undertake a long journey in the snow, and to be a month in hotels.

— **The Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, wife of Governor General Lord Dufferin, Rideau Hall, Ottawa, 1872.**

On Tour With Pauline Johnson

By Betty C. Keller

His Majesty the West Wind

*Once in a fit of mental aberration
I wrote some stanzas to the western wind,
A very stupid, maudlin invocation
That into ears of audiences I've dinned.*

*A song about a sail, canoe and paddle
Recited by a sailor flannel dressed,
And when they heard it, people would skedaddle,
Particularly those who had been west.*

*For they alas had knowledge I was missing
To write of something I had never known,
That I had never experienced the driving
Of western winds across a prairie blown.*

*I never thought when grinding out those stanzas
I'd have to swallow specks of prairie dust,
That I'd deny my old extravaganzas
And wish His Majesty distinctly — cussed!*
— E. Pauline Johnson

Anyone familiar with the poetry of the Mohawk poet Pauline Johnson (1861-1913), and especially with her poem "The Song My Paddle Sings", will find it hard to believe that the above words were written by the same hand. "His Majesty the West Wind" appeared in print only once — in the *Toronto Globe* of Saturday, 15 December 1894 — and then it quietly vanished. It was one of a dozen of her poems inserted into a humorous travelogue called "There and Back" written by her versatile recital partner, the comedian/musician Owen A. Smily. His article chron-

icled their adventures on their first Western tour; her verses were added to commemorate specific towns or events enroute, but although many of them, including "His Majesty the West Wind", were intended to be humorous, Pauline's fans were not amused.

"The Song My Paddle Sings" had been completed in the winter of 1891-2, but it was another two and a half years before Pauline met the West Wind that she had "wooded" in its opening stanza. Her career had by this time taken her through most of southern Ontario, New York, New Jersey, the New England states and the Maritimes reciting her poems and stories, and then in the late spring of 1894, she travelled to London, England, where her first book of poems *White Wampum* was accepted by the prestigious Bodley Head Publishing Company.

On 31 July she rejoined Smily in Toronto and together they set out on their first tour of Western Canada. By 23 August they were in Rat Portage (Kenora) where they stayed at the Hilliard House. There was already a hint of autumn in the air so that Smily was forced to don a topcoat, but the weather didn't cool the partners' enthusiasm. Pauline wrote to her friend Harry O'Brien:

Ah! There are no such airs as these in England, no such skies, no such forest scents and wild sweet perfumes. These August days are gorgeous. The atmosphere is rife with amethyst, amber and opal tints, parented by the far off bush fires and the thin north air. The sun hangs like a ball of blood, and oh! the stillness, the silence, the magnitude of this country impresses me as it never has before!

Four days later they were in Morden, Manitoba, and no longer so entranced with Western weather. Smily

complained that it was quite enough to have a "great blistering breeze come tearing around the corner with a breath like a bake oven" without being covered in dust as well. After a ten mile buggy trip, everything from horses to passengers was covered in it. There was no difference in colour, he wrote, between his linen collar and his boots; both were uniform grey. "I've no doubt, the gophers when they first came here to settle were bright scarlet or perhaps a vivid green, but now as Miss Poetry [his name for his partner] remarks, they have become Quakers — in appearance, at least."

Pauline spent these dusty days composing poems like "His Majesty the West Wind". Although she often claimed that she had no sense of humour, she certainly had a fine appreciation of the ironic, and the poem was obviously intended to acknowledge her temerity in writing about a phenomenon she had never actually encountered before this trip. Some of her readers, however, were deeply offended by the poem and by another piece called "Little Vancouver". She was accused of "masquerading as a poetess". No one worthy of that name, it seems, would stoop to *slang*! For weeks, the pages of the literary journal *The Week* carried letters from readers debating her value as a poet.

Smily and Johnson had meanwhile gone on to perform at Boissevain, Souris, Carman, Manitou and West Selkirk before arriving in Winnipeg on 4 September for a four-night stand with a different sponsor every night: the Winnipeg Grace Church, the Rover Bicycle Club, the Church of Zion and the North Presbyterian Congregation. Smily, who had been a music hall performer in England, found that church dates such as these strained his repertoire somewhat, as he was forced to rely heavily on musical routines such as his "Music in Three Flats" or tragic recitals such as "The Death Watch of the Bastille", rather than the comedy sketches for which he was becoming well known — "Major McStynger's Mechanical Arm", "The Slumb'rous Citizen and the Midsummer Fly", and "Jim Wolff and the Cats".

The partners were delighted with Winnipeg's hospitality. Smily announced that it was part of a conspiracy to prevent tourists from going any further west. "It is hard to believe that such geniality and kindness from comparative strangers cannot be without an object. It seems too good to be true."

They started west again via CPR on 11 September, stopping off to perform that evening at Brandon, then continuing on to play Medicine Hat on the 13th and Pincher Creek two days later. While returning over this route by buggy as far as Lethbridge the following day, they disturbed a pair of wolves that were picking over the remains of a cow. Smily, inspired to play the frontier hero, whipped out his pistol and fired at them. The wolves continued their feast. "If I had aimed at the sun," he wrote, "the wolves might had had more

occasion to examine their insurance policies." Pauline commemorated the occasion — probably her own first sighting of a wolf in the wilds although she had often written of them — by writing "The Wolf" and included it in "There and Back". It was not printed again until 1912 when it appeared in *Flint and Feather*.

On 18 September they drove back to Fort Macleod, and while waiting for curtain time, the partners strolled along the Oldman River and staged an impromptu "paper race", releasing pieces of newspaper into the wind to see which one would vanish over the cliff and into the river first. According to Smily's tongue-in-cheek account, Pauline had attempted to cheat by tearing all the "ponderous" words out of her paper, but his paper won handily anyhow.

They played Calgary for two nights, then climbed aboard the CPR again for Banff, arriving there on 21 September in a snowstorm. A disappointed Pauline wrote her friend O'Brien: "Banff with its wondrous beauties is lost to us. We are here but a single day and the entire scenery with its mountain grandeur and superb forests of fir is shrouded in a snowstorm. We can see nothing and go absolutely nowhere for we are both down with awful colds." In spite of their colds, they performed that night, then moved on for the following night's performance at Golden. They arrived in Vancouver on the 24th, their head colds conquered and their optimism restored, to be greeted by a downpour which continued throughout their visit.

But while the rain annoyed Smily, the crows annoyed him more. While modern Vancouverites tell stories of the unpleasant habits of pigeons and starlings, in 1894 it was crows and seagulls that caused the problems. What was even worse, Smily complained, a city by-law provided a \$25 fine for shooting a crow or making a seagull into "a nice corpse fit for stuffing and putting in a glass case" — a favourite pastime of bird-fancying Victorians. Smily's attitude toward crows was the result of being wakened each daybreak by a fat specimen that balanced on his Hotel Vancouver windowsill making enough racket to wake the dead. On his next visit, he vowed, he would shoot it even if it cost him "twice twenty-five dollars," but judging from his shooting prowess with the wolves, the crow was in no danger.

Smily and Johnson performed in Vancouver's Market Hall to an audience that was not as large "as the merits of the performance demanded but as large as could be expected on such a bad night." They rode the stage to New Westminster on 26 September to perform, then returned to Vancouver to make the crossing to Vancouver Island the next day.

Their visit to Nanaimo almost cost them their lives. Pauline Johnson loved luxury, especially in her travel

Pauline Johnson in her Indian costume, 1893.





"The song my paddle sings". On the Grand River, Ontario, late 1890s.

arrangements and her accommodation, and she generally instructed her agent to book her into the finest hotels along her tour route. But in the summer of 1894 she had returned from England stoney broke, having invested all her financial resources in her book of poems. (In those days unknown poets were required to subsidize their publishers.) Consequently, having splurged on the CPR's Hotel Vancouver, she had decided to economize in Nanaimo by booking into the Royal Hotel on the waterfront. When Smily saw the hotel, he refused to set foot in it and strode across the street to find better accommodation. That night the Royal and the entire block in which it was centred burned to the ground, cremating two of the hotel's patrons and causing fatal injuries to a woman who jumped from the roof into the waters of the harbour. Many others were seriously burned or injured while escaping.

The Royal was not the last run-down hotel Pauline ever booked into, because in many of the towns she visited *all* the hotels were run-down or jerry-built, but she never again willingly chose anything but the best hotel in town. She was not, however, entirely safe in first class hotels. In 1899 Winnipeg's Manitoba Hotel which she had made her home base for nearly three years, burned to the ground three days after she left on tour, and the fire consumed a trunk she had left

behind in storage. A few years later in Bridgeport, Nova Scotia, she reserved a room at Clark's Hotel, but apparently did not have time to check in before performance time. Later that night when her cab drew up in front of the hotel, she spotted flames rising from the attic regions and turned in the fire alarm.

Johnson and Smily's first Western tour concluded with two performances in Victoria, and although Pauline lamented the fact that she had scarcely seen either Victoria or Vancouver because both had been enveloped in rain and mist, she had no complaints about the reviews she received in the local papers. In fact, their reception on the entire trip had been excellent, and as they boarded the train again in Vancouver to head east, they knew they had found their best audiences.

In the next three years, Johnson and Smily made their more extended Western tours, establishing their headquarters in Winnipeg and concentrating on specific areas. Each year they spent up to five months in the West, and the remainder of the year in the northern states and Eastern Canada. The partnership was dissolved at Christmas 1897. Smily was eager to head up his own touring show; Pauline planned to marry Charles R.L. Drayton and retire from the recital platform. Neither plan worked out: Smily's small company failed

after two years and he returned to the role of back-up man for name acts; Drayton's family dissuaded him from marrying Pauline because of her Mohawk blood.

During most of 1898, Pauline was ill, so that it was the end of September before she returned to the West again. For the next two and a half years she toured Canada alone, occasionally sharing the recital platform with local talent, but most often presenting the entire two to two-and-a-half hour show by herself. For the first year her solo performances were not entirely successful while she experimented with items that would keep her audiences' attention, but by 1900 she was drawing crowds again — although primarily for her new role as a comedienne. The routines she had worked out by this time were patterned on those in her former partner's repertoire, but instead of what one reviewer described as "Mr. Smily's sidesplitters", she invented verse playlets in which she played all the characters. The most popular of these pieces was one called "Mrs. Stewart's Five O'Clock Tea" which, according to one reviewer, "set the audience in ecstasies of laughter." Mrs. Stewart, the wife of a Member of Parliament, decides to give a tea that will be the envy of every woman in Ottawa. When the playlet opens, she is "arranging her invitations" and is interrupted by an inquisitive neighbour whom she "bounces politely out the door with a sarcastic leer to the audience." When the guests arrived, Pauline as Mrs. Stewart welcomed each one, then moved into the character of the guest to deliver a speech or exchange views with other guests which included an Ontario mining man, a pompous railway director from Vancouver who bores everybody with his eulogies of the West, a shabby curate, and "an infant phenomenon who breathed hard and forgot her pieces in the middle."

Although Pauline wrote other monologues along these lines, none of them achieved the popularity of "Mrs. Stewart", and invariably there were complaints if she did not include it on every program. But routines like this required incredible stamina, and with an average of six shows a week, it was inevitable that her health suffered. When she developed rheumatic fever in the summer of 1900 and became ill again in the spring of the following year, she must have realized that she could not continue indefinitely as a solo performer.

She spent the summer of 1901 touring the Maritimes with Clara Cornyn, a classical pianist, but there was constant friction between the two women. Then in November of that year she was reunited with a young man named J. Walter McRaye whom she had met four years earlier, just as she was ending her association with Smily. McRaye had only a fraction of Smily's talent and considerably less charm, but Pauline recognized his potential as a manager and junior partner on her program, and on 6 November at Otta-



The poet in Vancouver, 1902.

wa's Orme Hall, they began a partnership that was to last until 1909.

Pauline suffered one more major illness before the Johnson-McRaye team made its first Western tour. In the third week of December she was stricken with erysipelas complicated by "brain fever". Six weeks later when the partners' desperate financial situation forced her to return to the recital platform, she had lost all her hair and her face was badly scarred.

On 6 June 1902 Johnson and McRaye booked into the Leland Hotel in Winnipeg, and Pauline invited all her old friends and the members of the press up to her suite. One of the admiring reporters wrote:

Though traces of her recent severe illness are noticeable, she is fast regaining strength. . . . A friend asked how she managed to dress for the stage with such shortly cropped tresses. "Well, I'll tell you," she replied, "when reciting in Mohawk costume, I wear a wig, but it bothers me, seeming to irritate my head. When I don evening dress, I imitate the chorus girls and wear a large hat which people say is very becoming, and no one suspects the tragedy underneath".

They left Winnipeg the next day to play "the Territories", although the tour was officially scheduled to begin on 26 June in Regina at celebrations in honour of the coronation of King Edward VII. Pauline was one of those asked to "say a few words" at a Government House party, and the partners were to follow this up with a recital the next night with Lieutenant Governor Forget and his wife as patrons. But two days

before his coronation, the King underwent an operation for appendicitis, and the celebration was cancelled in favour of a prayer meeting. Pauline and McRaye postponed their recital until 30 June when the King's life was out of danger; then they headed west again on the CPR.

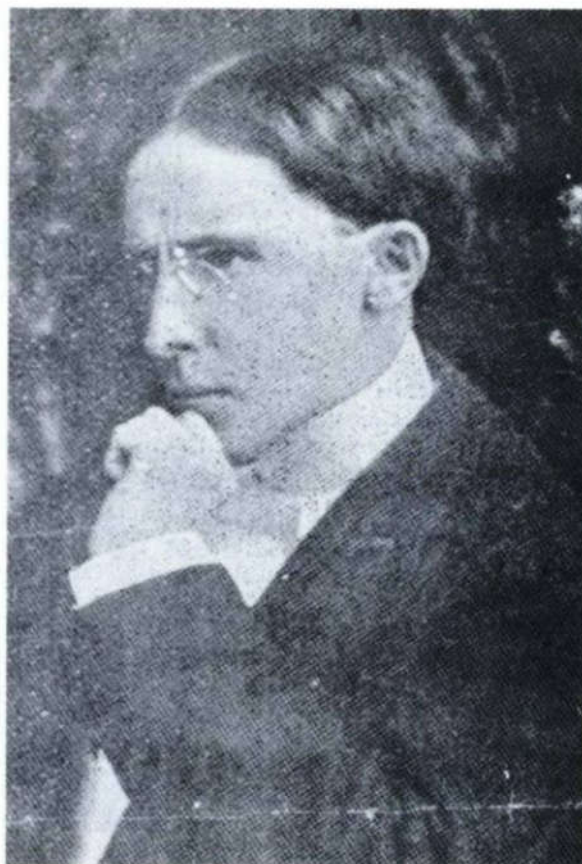
Pauline recorded her next Western adventure in a special correspondent's despatch to the *Toronto Globe* dated Calgary, 19 July 1902.

We were aboard No. 1, the CPR westbound and it was the fourth of July. We pulled into Medicine Hat long after twilight and were informed by the porter that there was a washout ahead, and we were to be in the siding all night. . . . The following morning the CPR did a great and memorable thing. It pulled us one hundred and twenty-five miles west, then tied us up for forty-eight hours at Gleichen in the heart of the Blackfoot Indian reserve.

No spot on the entire system of the great trans-continental highway could have been of so intense interest, and few more beautiful. We had come out of the east and its wheat lands of Manitoba, out of the drenching rains and unseasonable storms, into a perfect July day, with the prairie swelling away to the north; westward, a horizon fringed with a glory of glistening white peaks where the royal old Rockies swept irregularly across the sky; southward, the lonely habitations of an erstwhile powerful tribe of redmen.

We had not halted very long when the pride and delight of true Canadian hearts, the Imperial Limited, roared up abaft, and in another twelve hours a second No. 1 stood in to harbour, and then we learned the truth — two bridges down, one east, one west of Calgary. No. 2 is stuck at Banff, the Imperial Limited, eastbound, tied up the gods alone knew where. Never in the history of the CPR has traffic been so congested, never has the great Imperial Limited ceased its ninety-seven hour career across the continent. That criminal little Bow River has done what saint nor satan, fiend or fairy could never dare to do; it has brought the great panting trans-continental flyer to a standstill.

For two days the CPR had more than six hundred people as its guests in the middle of an Indian reserve. They were a motley assortment, ranging from a young English lord and his new bride, a contingent of RCMP officers bound for the Yukon, numerous American tourists, some Japanese university students, and a host of Doukhobor, Galician, Chinese, Swedish, Italian and English immigrants. Luckily, the weather remained clear and hot, and the passengers kept themselves entertained by collecting mushrooms or exploring the countryside on foot or on horses rented from the Indians at "a dollar a ride". Pauline and McRaye joined a



J. Walter McRaye, 1905.

group that was visiting the nearby Blackfoot encampment and she provided the readers of the *Globe* with a detailed description of their conditions.

When the trains were finally pulled to the edge of the Bow River, the passengers found that the bridge had been completely shattered: they would have to cross the river on foot across a makeshift bridge.

We detrained, about 600 strong, our luggage, the express goods and the mails were wheeled across by a perfect army of employees. The divisional superintendent, Mr. J. Niblok, met us and personally handed us one by one in Indian file across the cobwebby structure that was temporarily erected above the ties for transferring purposes. We boarded another train, and in a half hour we swelled the dense crowd at the station platform in Calgary. At the four points of the compass the tracks and bridges were washed away; the unprecedented rains, cloudbursts and prolonged storms had done their worst. Every hotel, Pullman car, boarding house and even sample room was crowded, people boarded together under any and every roof possible, and all of them "guests" of the railroad. . . . I took a run out to see the collapsed bridge nine miles west of the city. It



Pauline in 1912, a year before her death.

is one of the two splendid steel structures known as "the Twins". Its mate escaped but the western "twin" is down, standing, as it were, on its head. . . . The far shore was a sight never to be forgotten. Two trains waited to pull out for the Pacific coast, a No. 1 and an Imperial Limited. The baggage covered about 200 yards of sidetrack, the express goods and His Majesty's mails another 50 yards. . . . With almost incredible speed a trestle bridge is being constructed. . . . Within twelve hours the piles were a quarter way across the river, and the supports and sleepers laid and tracks bolted. The work going on is little short of miraculous. . . .

Johnson and McRaye left Calgary for the Kootenay mining towns on 20 July, then travelled on to the coast. By October they were heading out of Saskatoon by stagecoach on the beautiful Battleford Trail; in November they played southern Manitoba, stopped briefly in Winnipeg, then went east for Christmas. It was 1904 before the partners came back again, this time spending nearly three weeks in the Saskatoon-Battleford area before going to British Columbia to perform in the towns of the Fraser Canyon, the Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island. They went to Edmonton

and Fort Saskatchewan, then back to the Kootenays, west to the Okanagan and ended the summer with an 850 mile buggy ride over the Cariboo Road to the mining town of Barkerville. By September they were performing in Minnedosa, Manitoba and they closed the year in Regina under the patronage of the lieutenant-governor.

Johnson and McRaye were back on the prairies in the autumn of 1905 to celebrate the birthdays of Saskatchewan and Alberta, but Pauline had her heart set on further fields. Ever since her London debut in 1894, she had longed to go back to England for an extended tour. She was now in her forty-fifth year and longing for time to do the writing that her constant touring had prohibited, but she was still determined to finance one last London tour. When it became obvious to both of them that they would never save enough from their Canadian tours to finance the trip, in August 1905 Pauline wrote to her old friend Ernest Thompson Seton asking him to find a buyer for one of the Johnson family heirlooms, the ancient wampum belt which her grandfather, as speaker of the Six Nations, had held in council ceremonies. It had been valued at \$1,600, and although she did not expect to sell it for that amount, she was convinced that Seton would be able to find a buyer for it. Within a month the belt was on its way to its new owner in the United States, and the partners were making preparations for a year in London.

Pauline never made an official "farewell tour". In January 1909 Johnson and McRaye left Winnipeg for three and a half months of one-night stands across the prairies and out to the coast, and along the route Pauline told her personal friends that this would be the last time she would be coming to entertain them. On 6 May in Vancouver she announced to a packed Pender Auditorium that she was retiring in Vancouver later that year. The partners played their last date on 23 August in Kamloops.

McRaye married the actress Lucy Webling a few days later and they began touring together, but the audience response was never the same. They had come in the past to see the enchanting, witty, elegant lady in the buckskin dress, and no substitute would do.

For both Smily and McRaye, the years after they parted with Pauline were anti-climactic, for nothing they ever experienced matched the adventures they had been caught up in when touring the West with Pauline Johnson. ♦

*Betty C. Keller, who lives in British Columbia, has published biographies of Pauline Johnson and Ernest Thompson Seton. Her latest book, *On the Shady Side: Vancouver 1886-1914*, is in the process of publication.*

FORT EDMONTON, CHRISTMAS 1847

Paul Kane enjoys a memorable dinner and paints a celebrated native beauty

The fort at this time of the year presented a most pleasing picture of cheerful activity; every one was busy; the men, some in hunting and bringing in the meat when the weather permitted, some in sawing boards in the saw-pit, and building the boats, about thirty feet long and six feet beam, which go as far as York Factory, and are found more convenient for carrying goods on the Saskatchewan and Red River than canoes. They are mostly built at Edmonton, because there are more boats required to take the peltries to York Factory than is required to bring goods back; and more than one-half of the boats built here never return. This system requires them to keep constantly building.

The women find ample employment in making mocasins and clothes for the men, putting up pemmican in ninety-pound bags, and doing all the household drudgery, in which the men never assist them. The evenings are spent round their large fires in eternal gossiping and smoking. The sole musician of the establishment, a fiddler, is now in great requisition amongst the French part of the inmates, who give full vent to their national vivacity, whilst the more sedate Indian looks on with solemn enjoyment.

No liquor is allowed to the men or Indians; but the want of it did not in the least seem to impair their cheerfulness. True, the gentlemen of the fort had liquor brought out at their own expense; but the rules respecting its use were so strict and so well known, that none but those to whom it belonged either expected, or asked, to share it.

On Christmas day the flag was hoisted, and all appeared in their best and gaudiest style, to do honour to the holiday. Towards noon every chimney gave evidence of being in full blast, whilst savoury steams of cooking pervaded the atmosphere in all directions. About two o'clock we sat down to dinner. Our party consisted of Mr. Harriett [Harriott], the chief, and three clerks, Mr. Thebo [Thibault], the Roman Catholic missionary from Manitou Lake, about thirty miles off, Mr. Rundell [Rundle], the Wesleyan missionary, who resided within the pickets, and myself, the wanderer, who, though returning from the shores of the Pacific, was still the latest importation from civilized life.

The dining-hall in which we assembled was the largest room in the fort, probably about fifty by twenty-five feet, well warmed by large fires, which are scarcely ever allowed to go out. The walls and ceilings are boarded, as plastering is not used, there being no limestone within reach; but these boards are painted in a style of the most startling barbaric gaudiness, and the ceiling filled with centre-pieces of fantastic gilt scrolls, making altogether a saloon which no white man would enter for the first time without a start, and which the Indians always looked upon with awe and wonder.

The room was intended as a reception room for the wild chiefs who visited the fort; and the artist who designed the decorations was no doubt directed to "astonish the natives." If such were his instructions, he deserves the highest praise for having faithfully complied with them, although, were he to attempt a

repetition of the same style in one of the rooms of the Vatican, it might subject him to some severe criticisms from the fastidious. No tablecloth shed its snowy whiteness over the board; no silver candelabra or gaudy china interfered with its simple magnificence. The bright tin plates and dishes reflected jolly faces, and burnished gold can give no truer zest to a feast.

Perhaps it might be interesting to some dyspeptic idler, who painfully strolls through a city park, to coax an appetite to a sufficient intensity to enable him to pick an ortolan, if I were to describe to him the fare set before us, to appease appetites nourished by constant outdoor exercise in an atmosphere ranging at 40° to 50° below zero. At the head, before Mr. Harriett, was a large dish of boiled buffalo hump; at the foot smoked a boiled buffalo calf.

Start not, gentle reader, the calf is very small, and is taken from the cow by the Caesarean operation long before it attains its full growth. This, boiled whole, is one of the most esteemed dishes amongst the epicures of the interior. My pleasing duty was to help a dish of moffle, or dried moose nose; the gentleman on my left distributed, with graceful impartiality, the white fish, delicately browned in buffalo marrow. The worthy priest helped the buffalo tongue, whilst Mr. Rundell cut up the beavers' tails. Nor was the other gentleman left unemployed, as all his spare time was occupied in dissecting a roast wild goose. The centre of the table was graced with piles of potatoes, turnips, and bread conveniently placed, so that each could help himself without interrupting the labours of his companions. Such was our jolly Christmas dinner at Edmonton; and long will it remain in my memory, although no pies, or puddings, or blanc manges, shed their fragrance over the scene.

In the evening the hall was prepared for the dance to which Mr. Harriett had invited all the inmates of the fort, and was early filled by the gaily dressed guests. Indians, whose chief ornament consisted in the paint on their faces, voyageurs with bright sashes and neatly ornamented moccasins, half-breeds glittering in every ornament they could lay their hands on; whether civilized or savage, all were laughing, and jabbering in as many different languages as there were styles of dress. English, however, was little used, as none could speak it but those who sat at the dinner-table. The dancing was most picturesque, and almost all joined in it. Occasionally I, among the rest, led out a young Cree squaw, who sported enough beads round her neck to have made a pedlar's fortune, and having led her into the centre of the room, I danced round her with all the agility I was capable of exhibiting, to some highland-reel tune which the fiddler played with great vigour, whilst my partner with grave face kept jumping up and down, both feet off the ground at once, as only an Indian can dance. I believe, however, that we elic-



Royal Ontario Museum

"One that looks at the Stars", Fort Edmonton, 1847.

ited a great deal of applause from Indian squaws and children, who sat squatting round the room on the floor. Another lady with whom I sported the light fantastic toe, whose poetic name was Cun-ne-wa-bum, or "One that looks at the Stars," was a half-breed Cree girl; and I was so much struck by her beauty, that I prevailed upon her to promise to sit for her likeness, which she afterwards did with great patience, holding her fan, which was made of the tip end of swan's wing with an ornamental handle of porcupine's quills, in a most coquettish manner.

After enjoying ourselves with such boisterous vigor for several hours, we all gladly retired to rest about twelve o'clock, the guests separating in great good humour, not only with themselves but with their entertainers. ♦

Artist Paul Kane (1810-1871) left a vast pictorial record of the Canadian West in the nineteenth century.



Stuffed Beaver With All The Trimmings

*Christmas Feasting in Pioneer Canada
Was Often a "Pot Luck" Affair*

BY CHRISTOPHER DAFOE

Christmas at Moose Factory in the year 1747 was a cold and miserable occasion. "Spent the Day in Religious Exercise", wrote the far from jovial John Potts, "and to prevent hard Drinking I did read over to them one of the Little Books Your Honrs. was pleased to send us last year; wch. is a Disswasive from the Sin of Drunkenness. I gave them a Little Liquor in the Evening and at Eight O Clock Ordered all hands to bed and the Lights out".

It was a poor year for trenchermen and not much better for tipplers. The thoughts that passed through the minds of "all hands" as they settled into their cold beds can only be imagined. We can probably be certain, however, that feelings of loyalty to the Governor and Company were at a low ebb as Mr. Potts snuffed the candles.

The glow of Christmas shone a bit brighter at Manchester House on the North Saskatchewan in 1789 when the traders of the Hudson's Bay Company sat down to a frugal but jolly meal. "This being Christmas Morning," it was recorded, "our small stock of Flour, afforded us, a Cake to eat, with a little Tea & Chocolate, (which we all apparently enjoyed very much) no one can know what it is to want Bread, but those who experience it, (which we here, daily do, in this Wild Country; particular Holidays only excepted)".

The pickings were rather more sufficient on the shores of Lake Athabaska in 1820 when George Simpson joined in the celebrations and later wrote: "This being Xmas day the people had a dram in the morning and were allowed to make holyday. The Gentlemen sat down to the most sumptuous Dinner that Fort Wedderburn could afford, true English fare, Roast Beef and plum pudding and afterwards a temperate Kettle of Punch."

The word "temperate" could mean anything, but we can hope that the rum flowed freely at that long ago Christmas. They lived hard lives and the few comforts that came their way were well earned.

Simpson, in fact, appears to have been a hearty and generous host when the occasion called for it. On two occasions in the 1830s a friend at Red River wrote to James Hargrave at York Factory in praise of Simpson's hospitality. "The Governor has given two [or] three grand let outs", gushed a letter of December 1830. A year later the correspondent returned to the same theme: "I wish we had you here during these festivals. I think we would line your Ribs, Good Fat Beef for 3 half pence a pound as sleke as Ten."

Roast beef was not always available on the frontier. On the Stikine River on 25 December 1868 the traveller Charles Frederic Morrison found himself enjoying an unusual substitute for turkey, goose or beef. "Our

Christmas dinner," he recalled later, "consisted of a young beaver stuffed like a suckling pig, which proved delicious. Lynx also makes a good stew if you do not think of cats, and squirrels make *un grand ragoût*."

The tail of the beaver was considered a delicacy in pioneer times and is still enjoyed by discerning natives in the wilderness. The preparation of beaver tail, for those of you who are someday confronted by a raw specimen while half a dozen hungry friends look on, is almost as simple as poaching eggs. First, remove the tail from the body. Blanch it in boiling water and peel off the outer skin, as you would peel a blanched tomato. Place the tail on a rack over a drip pan and bake in a moderate oven for half an hour or until done.

Beaver tail can also be skewered on a green stick and cooked over an open fire, but if you are like me, you will find that the stick always burns through. Then the meat falls into the fire. Scorched beaver tail is not the dish that made mouths water on the Stikine in 1868.

In 1883 Mrs. Clarke of Toronto published a cookery book that contained a tempting recipe for a Christmas soup that sent Canadian wives rushing to alert their cooks. Almond Soup, as promoted by Mrs. Clarke, is not often seen on Canadian tables at Christmas at this end of the century, but it may not be too late for a comeback. The soup, according to the Clarke method, is easy to make: "Throw some sweet almonds in boiling water to get rid of the husks and skins. Pound them in a mortar with some lukewarm water, adding by degrees pounded white sugar and pounded cinnamon. Turn it out on a plate or dish which must be able to stand the fire, previously lining the bottom with fingers of bread powdered with cinnamon. Thoroughly heat these ingredients over a clear fire and serve."

Some readers, of course, will want to do all this in a blender or food processor. Go ahead, but it will not be authentic. Mrs. Clarke, like many early cookery book writers, was vague about proportions. With old recipes, you often play it "by ear".

Mrs. Clarke, Canada's Fanny Farmer, was more precise in her excellent recipe for bread sauce, an essential accompaniment to roast turkey. Her method is as follows:

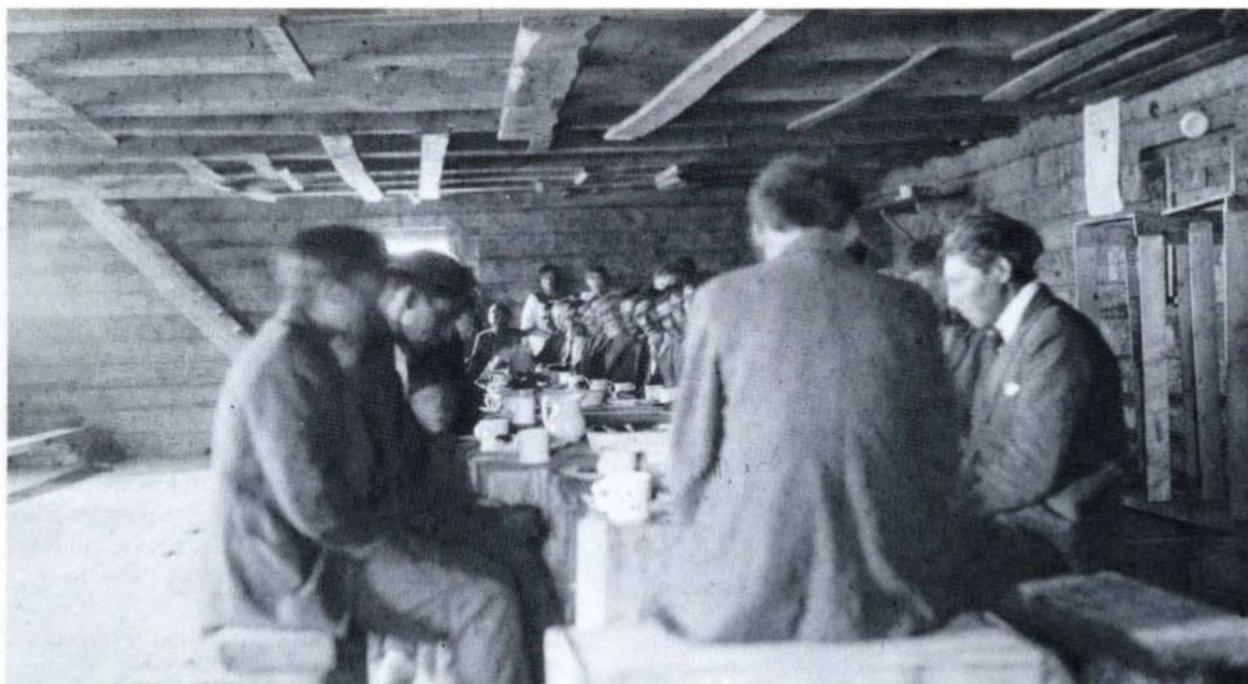
Bread Sauce

(For Poultry or Game)

Take all the giblets from a fowl, place in 1 pint of water and add 1 onion, 10 whole peppers and 1 blade of mace. (Use ½ tsp. powdered mace.) Simmer for 1 hour, then strain the liquor over ¾ lb. bread crumbs. Place in a stewpan, cover and let it stand over a low heat without boiling for 1 hour. Beat with a fork until smooth. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring well until thick, add 2 tbsps. cream and serve hot.

—Mrs. Clarke's *Cookery Book*, Toronto, 1883

Top of page 28: Bringing in the plum pudding. From *The Canadian Illustrated News*, 24 December 1870.



Hudson's Bay Company

An Indian feast at Fort Albany, Christmas 1925.

In our own day, bread sauce graces the table when turkey is served. In the nineteenth century, in the more remote corners of the Dominion, it could easily have enhanced a dish of roast porcupine, haunch of bear, fox, or wolverine or possibly a stew made of muskrat or moose. Bread sauce may well have been on the table when one of the last Eskimo curlews was served up at a Canadian Christmas dinner long ago.

Today we trim the fat away. Our great grandparents gorged on it. Out in the wilderness they would have died without it. A fatty bear ham was a prized dish at Christmas in a pioneer community and eyes sparkled when a stew of black squirrel came to the table.

Pies made of wild berries were popular in the summertime, but at Christmas the pioneer wife relied on preserved fruits for her pies and puddings.

The early Canadian Christmas table groaned under its weight of food. It was an age that cared little for diets and slim bodies. A great belly indicated a great man.

Meals that would stop us cold in our tracks were joyfully consumed by our Victorian ancestors and their grandparents. They enjoyed a salad, but they were primarily meat eaters and, when they got the chance, they ate a lot. As the nineteenth century drew to a close and the twentieth century dawned, the grand fourteen-course banquet became a popular feature of Canadian social life. In *The New Cook Book*, edited by Grace E. Dennison in 1906, the proper form for one of these gargantuan meals was laid down as follows:

1. Shell fish — small clams or oysters, one half dozen for each person, laid in their shells on a bed of finely crushed ice. With these are offered red and black pepper, grated horseradish, small thin slices of buttered down bread or tiny crisp biscuits and quarters of lemon.
2. Soup.
3. A course of hors d'oeuvres, such as radishes, celery, olives and salted almonds.
4. Fish, with potatoes and cucumbers, the latter dressed with oil and vinegar.
5. Mushrooms or sweetbreads.
6. Asparagus or artichokes.
7. Spring lamb or roast with a green vegetable.
8. Roman punch.
9. Game with salad.
10. A second entrée.
11. A rich pudding.
12. A frozen sweet.
13. Fresh and crystallized fruit and bonbons.
14. Coffee and liqueurs.

On Dominion Day 1898 in Dawson City a hungry crowd sat down to attack a banquet that consisted of Consommé à la Jardinière, Rockpoint Oysters, Gherkins, Piccalilli, Lobster Cutlets à la Newberg, Pickled English Walnuts, Chicken Salad en Mayonnaise, Broiled Moose Chops aux Champignons, Tongue, Roast Beef, Boiled Ham, Bengal Club Chutney, Saratoga Chips, Assorted Cakes and Jellies, Pears, Peaches, Edam Cheese and Coffee.

At Christmas feasts in the age of the pioneer the pudding was, as it is today, of supreme importance. The old traders in their forts wanted pudding too, but they often had to make do with something less than the perfect pudding. Margaret Arnett MacLeod describes the place of pudding in the old world of the fur trade:

The story of the fur trade plum pudding is an epic that has not been written: how through a long period it kept alive the spirit of festivity at lonely posts in a lonely land; how it was achieved, always with difficulty, often in spite of almost insurmountable obstacles; and how it always triumphed, even when the spirit had almost faded, or had a hard fight to survive.

Currants and raisins specially ordered from England were hoarded from the spring shipment. Breadcrumbs might have to be omitted, or eggs, milk, spices and other ingredients considered essential. Pudding cloths of doubtful history were often pressed into service. There were even times when the number of raisins and currants per guest had to be reckoned, or dried saskatoon berries used instead. Amazing concoctions were stirred and wishes made, sometimes with wondering Indians as spectators of the traditional rites, but the ultimate result was always pronounced a masterpiece! At sight of the pudding borne in steaming on a platter, or enveloped in dancing blue flame, everybody's spirits soared.

An authentic Hudson's Bay Company nineteenth century Christmas pudding is to be found in Anne Clarke's *The Hudson's Bay Cook Book*, published by the old firm in 1899. The tempting recipe, preserved and handed down for the use of readers of *The Beaver*, is as follows:

Christmas Pudding

Ingredients: Pick and stone 2 lbs. of good Valentias; pick, wash and dry 1 lb. of currants; chop 2 lbs. of beef suet; have ready ½ a lb. of brown sugar, 6 oz. candied peel, cut thin, 2½ lbs. of flour, 6 eggs, a quart or more of milk, an ounce of mixed spice, and a tablespoon of salt.

Put the flour into a large pan, add the plums, currants, suet, sugar, peel, spice and salt, and mix them well together *while dry*. Beat the eggs well up in a large basin, and add a portion of the milk, stirring it at the same time. Make a well in the middle of the flour, and pour in the milk and eggs. Keep stirring till all the ingredients are thoroughly mixed. Add more milk if necessary, and stir up again; the batter should be rather stiff. Have a good stout cloth ready; wet and flour it well, lay it over a pan, pour in the batter, and tie it firmly up. When the water in the copper or large kettle *boils*, put the pudding in and let it boil gently for five or six hours. Turn it carefully out of the cloth. Serve with or without sauce.

Turkey was not always available in the old days, but our pioneer ancestors always found something to stand in for the noble bird. Passenger Pigeon, now extinct, but which once darkened the sky as it passed in great flocks, was a favourite, often preserved in brine.

Another possibility was moose nose, still a popular dish with natives in the wilds. The preparation of this curious treat is simple in the extreme and no degree from the Cordon Bleu school is required. The nose must first be separated from the head and antlers. Then burn off the hairs. The naked nose is then diced and boiled with vegetables.

Those who have eaten moose nose claim that the meat improves if it is hung for a few days. Others prefer it smoked. Some will not touch it.

There is no point in telling people how to cook a turkey. Everyone wants it the way mother used to cook it and, whether it is served with forcemeat or chestnut sauce, it is bound to give satisfaction — unless the cook is a complete duffer.



An interesting change from the traditional turkey might be Roast Haunch of Venison, a popular item in the 1899 *Hudson's Bay Cook Book*:

Roast Haunch of Venison

Trim the joint neatly, wipe it well with a cloth, rub it over with butter, and sprinkle it with salt; then wrap it up in a sheet of buttered kitchen paper. Make a paste with flour and water, roll it out to the thickness of about half an inch, wrap the joint in this, and close up all the openings carefully by wetting the edges of the sheet of paste; lastly, pack up the haunch into a sheet of well buttered paper, put in the oven for about three hours, basting occasionally, then remove the paste and paper coverings, baste the haunch plentifully with butter, and when nearly done dredge some flour over it and some salt. Serve on a hot water dish.

Haunch of venison might be served with a currant sauce, described in *The Canadian Housewife's Manual of Cookery*, published in Hamilton in the year 1861. The method of preparation is simple: Boil one ounce of dried currants in half a pint of water for five minutes. Add one half cup of bread crumbs, six cloves, one glass of port wine and one teaspoon of butter. Stir until smooth, remove from heat and pour over the venison.

Bon appétit. ♦

Christopher Dafoe edits The Beaver and eats regularly.

Canada's Queen of Song

Opera Superstar Emma Albani Charmed Queen Victoria

By Cheryl MacDonald

In 1924, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King was in London, England, and called on Emma Albani. A quarter of a century earlier, she had been Canada's most famous celebrity, an operatic soprano adored by millions, including Queen Victoria. Now, at 76, King found her "old, and feeble, and dependent . . . married to an old man named Gye who is quite as helpless as herself." By the time he returned to Canada, King had made up his mind to do something to help the woman who had been Canada's queen of song.

The penury in which Emma lived would have been inconceivable at the peak of her career. In 1883 she made a triumphant return to Canada after several years' absence, appearing first in Toronto in early February. As the mad heroine of *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Emma thrilled a capacity crowd at the Grand Opera House with her voice and appearance. A reporter from *The Globe* remarked:

A sweet, honest, good face and a fine majestic figure please the eyes as much as the voice charms the ears . . . Act by act the impression made by her first aria increased until it culminated in the celebrated mad scene in which her perfect control and great resources were fully displayed.

Although the opera was cut short when tenor Luigi Ravelli suddenly lost his voice, nothing could detract from Emma's performance. She was called back before the curtain several times, prompting a stage hand to observe, "Well, I guess this ain't a stage play, it's like a political meeting."

Originally, Toronto had been the only Canadian city on the opera company's itinerary. But, six weeks later, after American appearances which included a concert for President Chester A. Arthur, Emma made a special trip to Montreal.

It was a triumphant homecoming for Emma. Born Marie-Louise-Emma-Cécile Lajeunesse in Chambly, she inherited musical talent from both parents. Her father, Joseph, was a musician and teacher who never made quite enough to support his family comfortably. A strict disciplinarian, he insisted Emma and her younger sister Cornélia practise their music four hours every day. The work was so demanding that Emma sometimes fell asleep at the keyboard, and friends criticized Lajeunesse's obsession with his children's training. However, the benefits of the lessons were quickly realized. By 1855, when she was eight, Emma could play both harp and piano, read classical music on sight, and, by the next year, was singing and playing publicly.

That year, Emma's mother died of childbirth complications. The baby died soon afterwards. Unable to care for his three surviving children alone, Joseph Lajeunesse sent his six-year-old son to a school where he would be groomed for the priesthood. Emma and Cornélia accompanied their father to the Sacred Heart (Sacré-Coeur) convent northwest of Montreal, where Joseph had obtained a teaching position.

The convent at Sault-au-Récollet was a well-respected school for rich young ladies. There, Emma and Cornélia were carefully trained in the academic and practical subjects considered necessary for respectable young women, including "polite literature . . . domestic economy, plain and fancy needlework." The music lessons also continued, and when Emma began to win every musical competition the school sponsored, she was forbidden to participate. However, she was given ample opportunity to display her skills, singing at Mass in the convent's chapel, or taking part in the occasional public concert.

One of the most important appearances of her school years was at a concert given in honour of the Prince

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MADAME ALBANI-GYE, (NÉE EMMA LAJEUNESSE).
THE CANADIAN PRIMA DONNA ABSOLUTA.

of Wales, who visited Canada in 1860. More than 6,000 people attended the Grand Music Festival under the direction of Frederick Herbert Torrington. As she sang for Prince Albert Edward, Emma could not have known that this was to be only the first of many encounters with royalty.

Before she could concentrate on a musical career, however, there was another matter to consider. Like many young Catholic girls, Emma contemplated a religious vocation, and discussed her feelings with the convent's Mother Superior. Although a stage career of any kind was still considered slightly scandalous, Madame Trincano urged Emma to consider one. "God has given you a beautiful voice, and I think it is clearly your duty to use it." She suggested Emma pursue a singing career for a few years; then, if she felt attracted to a religious life, the nuns would happily welcome her back.

Joseph Lajeunesse supported Emma's decision, and arranged benefit concerts to help finance further studies. When the Montreal concerts failed to raise enough funds, Emma moved to Albany, New York. There she met with more success. After several benefit concerts, enough money was raised to finance musical studies in Paris.

Emma, circa 1870.



National Library of Canada



Emma, aged 5.

Metropolitan Toronto Library

Emma reached the French capital in 1868 and was appalled at the chilly reception she received from the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Convent, to whom she had been given a letter of introduction. She found her landlady more to her liking. Madame La Baronne de Laffitte had been married and widowed twice. Her first husband had been an opera singer, her second an aristocrat, and so she had many contacts in the artistic community, as well as at the court of Napoleon III. Consequently, Emma gained entry into the musical world of Paris, and, on one occasion, sang for the Empress Eugénie.

She was also gratified at her music teacher's assessment of her talents. Gilbert Duprez, a retired singer, was demanding but fair. When someone asked about Emma's talent, he said, "She has a beautiful voice and the sacred fire. She is the kind of wood from which great flutes are made."

However, the process of making a great flute was a time-consuming one. At the urging of an influential acquaintance, Emma went to Italy to study under Francesco Lamperti. When she ran out of money, she looked for work, and was fortunate enough to obtain a singing engagement in Sicily.

Although there is evidence that Emma first sang in Sicily in 1869, she recorded 1870 as the date of her debut there. She prepared carefully. Italian audiences were notoriously critical, and Sicilians were among the most critical of all. Lamperti advised Emma to choose *La Sonnambula*, an opera written by Sicilian composer Vincenzo Bellini. Both Emma and her teacher

felt that, if she succeeded with a Bellini opera in the composer's homeland, she need never fear another audience.

Fear of failure was only one of the worries facing Emma as she awaited her debut in Messina. Like modern rock fans, nineteenth century operatic audiences were extremely vocal in their expressions of enthusiasm or disapproval. A disappointed audience showed its feelings through hisses, catcalls, and tossing rotten fruit and other items at the performer. Even success could be dangerous since bouquets and gifts were thrown on stage, as Emma learned later in her career when she was hit on the head by a jewel case tossed by an appreciative admirer.

Just prior to her debut, Emma assumed the stage name of Albani, which was suggested by her elocution teacher. In April 1870, trembling with nervousness, she faced the Messina audience as Emma Albani. Her nervousness proved unnecessary: they adored her, and her success led to a series of appearances throughout Sicily. Overnight, she became a household word on the island. "The voice of Albani is not made to satisfy listeners . . . who 'are all ear' . . . but to fill all hearts," observed one newspaper. It later reported, "Emma Albani is a privileged creature in whom both the lady and the artist stand at the same eminence, and in whom are in unison the actress and the singer."

Her reputation spread, resulting in engagements in Florence and Malta. A British military base strategically situated in the Mediterranean, Malta proved to be an important stepping stone in Emma's career. There were few amusements for the residents, and the novelty of a young, attractive singer was a welcome diversion. Soon Emma found a permanent place in the hearts of her listeners as a result of *The Barber of Seville*.

Rossini's opera includes a music lesson, in which prima donnas traditionally inserted a song of their own choice. At first, Emma sang *Carnaval de Venise*, but one night her audience clamoured for *Home, Sweet Home*. Ever willing to oblige her public, Emma complied, and from then on it became a regular part of her performance and one of Emma's signature tunes.

Her popularity brought her into the most exalted circles in Malta. She met the governor, the admiral in charge of the naval base, and others who convinced her to go to London, the wealthiest, most cosmopolitan city in the western world. Emma took their advice. In 1871, she reached the country which would be her home for the rest of her life.

Emma's reputation had preceded her to London. She gained an interview with Frederick Gye, manager of the Royal Italian Opera at Covent Garden. After hearing her sing, Gye offered her a five-year contract, although he could not provide her with a role immediately. Consequently, Emma returned to the Continent



Frederick Gye, manager of Covent Garden.

for more study, and more work.

During the winter of 1871-2 she made her first appearance in *Mignon*, a relatively new opera by French composer Ambroise Thomas. Since neither Emma nor Lamperti had seen it performed, she travelled to Paris to discuss *Mignon* with the composer. From him she learned the importance of drama, as well as musical technique in opera. As a result, her performance in *Mignon* was well received, and the management of the Florence opera house where it was performed asked her to extend her engagement. Frederick Gye refused to allow it, since Emma's London debut was rapidly approaching.

She appeared in *La Sonnambula* at Covent Garden on 2 April 1872. The debut opened new doors to her. Not only did she receive invitations to sing privately for members of the British aristocracy, but she made many friends in English musical circles, among them Arthur Sullivan. Best remembered today for his collaboration with William S. Gilbert, Sullivan was Britain's foremost composer. He and Emma enjoyed a long and happy professional relationship based on mutual respect for each other's talents.

As Emma's fame spread, she came to the attention of Queen Victoria. Although she had lived reclusively since her husband's death, Victoria was very fond of music. In 1874, Emma was invited to Windsor for a

command performance. Her selections included Gounod's *Ave Maria* and *Home, Sweet Home*. The queen was so impressed that she sent Emma a pearl cross and necklace as a token of her appreciation.

In the same year, Emma returned to the United States, where she was very popular with audiences. Although there was no time for a trip to Montreal, she did manage to visit Albany, where she was happily welcomed by friends and former neighbours. Enthusiastic as her reception was, it paled in comparison to her Montreal homecoming nine years later.

By this time, Emma was married to Ernest Gye, her manager's son. Shortly after the wedding in 1878, Frederick Gye had died as a result of a hunting accident, and so never saw his grandson, Emma's only child, who was born the following year. Until he was sent to school, young Frederick-Ernest frequently accompanied his mother on her tours, while his father went along to look after business arrangements.

Emma, her husband and their entourage arrived at Montreal's Bonaventure station late on 26 March 1883. A large crowd had gathered, so thick that the party had to fight its way to the street. Outside, a local snowshoe club formed an honour guard. Carrying torches through the busy streets, they guided Emma's carriage to the Windsor Hotel. Here, the crowd was so thick that Emma had to be lifted over their heads and carried into the hotel.

Her week in Montreal was hectic. The next day, she appeared at city hall, where Louis-Honoré Fréchet, a politician and poet, read a poem he had written in her honour. Afterwards, she shook hands with more than 2,000 people before returning to her hotel to prepare for the evening's performance. It was an exhausting day, and, as she returned, Emma thought, "after such a commotion and emotion I should never be able to sing another note!"

She recovered beautifully, nevertheless. Since Montreal had no opera house, Emma gave a concert at Queen's Hall. Without difficulty, she filled the house. In the thirteen years since her operatic debut she had become one of the world's most famous singers, appearing in many cities, singing to ruling monarchs in Russia, Britain and elsewhere. She also enjoyed a reputation as a superb singer of oratorio, and had become something of a British institution. Audiences adored her, Queen Victoria admired her talent and her impeccable private life, composers respected her technical skills. More unusual, other prima donnas liked her. In a profession where bitter rivalry was rampant, one prima donna summed up the type of admiration created by Emma's kindness and charm. "There is one soprano in the world I do not hate, and that is Emma Lajeunesse, whom they call Albani."

In other cities, Emma's charm and talents endeared her to thousands, but in Montreal there was an addi-



An older Emma wearing the cross given her by Queen Victoria.

tional cause for adulation. She was a local girl who had conquered enormous odds in her quest for fame. At the outset of her career, neither Canada nor the United States could offer operatic training. Simply finding the means to obtain an education in Europe was a major undertaking, and launching a successful career was something no Canadian had ever done. So, when Emma appeared before the Montreal audience, she was not only a world famous soprano, but also a symbol of Canadian achievement.

Needless to say, the audience adored her, especially when she sang *Souvenirs du jeune âge* from Hérold's *Pré-aux-Clercs*. "I wondered what I could sing which would please them all best," Emma recalled. "It was an inspiration, and made so deep an impression that when I came to the last words, '*Rendez moi ma patrie ou laissez moi mourir*,' ['Restore to me my homeland, or allow me to die,'] the whole public rose and cheered me for fully five minutes, and I had to repeat it before I sang *Home, Sweet Home*." The song, reprinted with Emma's portrait on it, became immensely popular in Quebec.

A second concert was scheduled for Thursday, but first Emma visited the convent at Sault-au-Récollet. The nuns were charmed with her, noting that she had

retained "the good principles of her education at Sacré-Coeur" despite the temptations of an artistic life. Emma spoke to the students, then sang *Ave Maria* in the convent chapel. When she finished, many of her listeners were in tears.

Six years later, Emma returned to North America for an extended tour. She sang in several Canadian cities, including Quebec, Hamilton, Toronto, London and Ottawa. William Van Horne of the CPR put his private railway car at her disposal, while Sir John A. and Lady Macdonald entertained Emma and her husband at Earnscliffe. While in Ottawa, Emma also met Sir Wilfrid Laurier, whom she greatly admired.

During this visit to North America, Emma became the first Canadian to sing at New York's Metropolitan Opera, as well as the Met's first Desdemona. The role in Verdi's *Otello* was one she repeated in many cities, often with Italian tenor Francesco Tamagno in the lead role.

A large man with dark, curly hair, Tamagno threw himself so completely into his part that he sometimes frightened Emma. "In the last act, where he kills Desdemona, he was so apparently real that at first he made me quite nervous that he might make a mistake and forget he was only acting." Tamagno did not forget, but his dedication caused other problems for Emma. Tamagno had seen an Italian version of Shakespeare's play, and incorporated some of actor Tomasso Salvini's techniques in the opera. He insisted that, for dramatic effect, he had to climb stairs to Desdemona's bed, strangle her, stab himself in remorse, then roll down the steps to die in agony. Nothing could persuade him to change his methods, not even the absence of a suitable platform during a Mexican engagement. Instead, four strong men were hired. On hands and knees they supported the bed on their backs throughout the performance, leaving Emma, who was fashionably plump, convinced the men and the bed, with her on it, would collapse at any moment. "It was a very ridiculous position for a prima donna in a very dramatic situation," she recalled in her memoirs.

In addition to the extended North American tour, Emma continued to appear throughout Europe. She also visited Australia, New Zealand, India, Ceylon and South Africa. In 1896, the year she retired, she toured Canada again, visiting Calgary, St. Boniface and Vancouver, as well as many other cities. By this time she was nearly fifty, and her voice was beginning to show signs of age. Although Adam Brown, a prominent Hamiltonian, told his wife, "I never had such a music treat in my life — her singing was beyond description," the *Hamilton Spectator* was less kind:

Her voice, it is true, has not all the freshness and purity which used to distinguish it; there are signs of wear, and in the upper register the quality is a trifle strained and the intonation uncertain. Yet the



The great Jean de Reszke.

Metropolitan Toronto Library

voice is as broad and full as it was of old, and it is still wielded with that superb art and fine taste which have made Albani one of the foremost artists of the time.

Yet this was the year Emma played Isolde to Jean de Reszke's Tristan, rendering a performance that became legendary in the history of Wagnerian opera in England. Nevertheless, she decided it was time to retire from opera, and to devote herself to concerts and oratorio. Gradually, the performances dwindled, although there were still some notable occasions. In 1901, in accordance with the late queen's wishes, she sang at Victoria's private family funeral service. She also sang for the new king, who, as Prince of Wales, had heard her in Montreal more than four decades earlier. By 1911, however, Emma had more or less accepted that her career was over, and published her memoirs.

Although Emma and her husband had amassed a fortune during her career, bad investments resulted in financial setbacks. For a time, Emma sang in music halls and gave singing lessons, but eventually the Gyes were forced to rent their luxurious home in Kensington and lease less expensive accommodation.



Francesco Tamagno, tenor.

When Mackenzie King discovered Emma's impoverished circumstances, he tried to persuade the Canadian government to provide a pension for her. The attempt failed, as did a similar effort in the province of Quebec. By 1925, when her husband died, Emma's situation was desperate.

That spring, an English fund-raising drive was organized, and a benefit concert was held in London on 25 May. Meanwhile, Montreal's French language newspaper, *La Presse*, also raised funds for Emma's benefit, and a concert was organized in Chambly.

During her career, Emma's talents inspired the United States, Britain and France to claim her as their own. In her mind, however, there was never any doubt where her loyalties lay. "I have married an English-

man, and have made my home in England, but I still remain at heart a French Canadian." As a result, she was somewhat embittered by the slowness of Canada's response to her need. "I believed that my country had forgotten me, I who had never forgotten it."

Still, she accepted the tribute of the public, many of whom had never heard her sing, as best she could. Enough money was raised to enable her to return to her home on Tregunter Road, Kensington. There, on 3 April 1930 she died peacefully in her sleep, largely forgotten by a world that had once hailed her as Canada's queen of song.

Cheryl MacDonald's biography of Emma Albani was published by Dundurn Press in 1984.

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CHRISTMAS TREATS, 1911

HOCKEY NIGHT IN CANADA, 1905

The Brave Yukoners Gave Their All For The Stanley Cup — And Lost

—
By Camilla Cornell

Illustrations By Jan Kamienski

Canada's devotion to hockey is legendary, and few would dispute that the Stanley Cup is the pinnacle of hockey glory, but the time, money and effort expended by an ill-fated Yukon team to bring that piece of silver back to Dawson City might stretch the belief of even the most avid hockey fan.

The team, formed in 1905, was called the Yukon Nuggets. They travelled 4,000 miles from Dawson City to Ottawa to compete for the Stanley Cup. They walked or bicycled 350 miles over a mountain pass, risked their stomachs if not their lives on a rough sea voyage, and traversed this vast frozen land by train, only to lose miserably.

The seed of the Nuggets' ambition was planted in 1902 when Dawson built itself an athletic complex to rival any in the East. There were plenty of gold-rush dollars to finance the indoor rink, training rooms, showers, lounge and dining room. Dawson prided itself on keeping up with the "outside". There was even a boiler and dynamo to provide heat, lighting and water for what the *Dawson News* referred to as the city's "big house of amusement".

Organized competition between the civil service hockey team and the police, the citizens and the club teams followed, and it occurred to the Dawsonites that

a little bit of hockey glory would go a long way toward impressing the Easterners.

The Stanley Cup, donated in 1893 by the sixth Governor General of Canada, Lord Stanley, was just the thing to make them famous. A keen hockey fan, Stanley purchased the prize for \$50 in the hope that it would encourage interest in the sport. The champions of the Amateur Hockey Association were awarded the prize and held the responsibility of defending it against any team who wished to challenge their right to hold it — with the approval of the cup's trustees.

Challengers had to play on the home ice of the cup holders and pay the costs of getting there. By March of 1903 the Dawsonites had begun to look into the expense of a hockey tour. In the summer of 1904 their challenges to the reigning champs — the Ottawa Silver Seven — and several other Ontario teams had been accepted, and arrangements had been made with the CPR for a private railway car to carry the team East.

An all-star team was chosen from the best Dawson had to offer. The only stipulation Ottawa had made was that the Yukonites could play no exhibition games prior to the best-two-out-of-three series with the Silver Seven.





Hope ran high for the frontier sportsmen. Many had played on top Eastern teams years earlier. They were fit from the hard life of the North and they were optimistic. Indeed, one headline proclaimed, "Attempt will be made to bring North the Stanley Cup — Lightning men from Yukon sure to defeat most Eastern teams."

The men set off on 18 December 1904 planning to alight in Ottawa four days before the big game on 13 January 1905. But from the first their plans went awry. Oddly enough for that time of year in the Yukon there was no snow. They couldn't use the dog teams they had counted on to move their luggage over the pass. Consequently, some walked — an average of 36 miles daily with heavy packs — and others rode bicycles.

They made it to Whitehorse within nine days — right on schedule, but at this point their luck ran out. The snow that had deserted them when they needed it now made an appearance. The train meant to get them to their ship in the coastal town of Skagway was unable to fight the wild blizzard and the Nuggets were

trapped for three days in a Whitehorse hotel room. The *S.S. Amur*, en route to Vancouver, sailed a day late and just a few hours before the team reached the dock. The Nuggets had been set back two days.

They took the next boat to Seattle, doubled back to Vancouver by train and then caught the trans-national CPR. The trip was long and hard. The men had had almost no training for a month, and there is some doubt as to whether they were an especially good team to begin with.

Still, their arrival in Ottawa was greeted with great enthusiasm. Reserve tickets in Dey's Arena were sold out and standing room went for one dollar a head. The new Governor General of Canada, Earl Grey, and his wife were two of the 2,500 people who crowded the stadium to witness the event.

In those days of seven-man hockey, the Dawson team consisted of Albert Forrest as goal tender — at 17, he set a record which still stands as the youngest goalie in Stanley Cup history — Johnstone as point, Hannay (a former member of the Winnipeg Victorias) as cover

point, McLennan as rover, Kennedy as right wing, Watt as left wing and Smith as centre.

The Ottawa team boasted the famous combination which had kept the cup in the national capital for several seasons, with D.W. Finnie at goal, Arthur Moore at cover, Harvey Pulford as point, Archie Smith and H.L. Gilmore as wingers, Frank McGee at centre and Henry Westwick as rover.

The visitors lost the first game of the series 9-2 to the well-oiled Ottawa team. The *Manitoba Free Press* pointed out that, "the Dawson City team had only just arrived and that they had hardly had time to get into proper shape," but they added, "the form they did show was of the most mediocre kind...".

The *Toronto Telegram* was even less charitable. The Yukon team, it reported, "faded away like a snowball beneath a June day's sun," and the game only needed an orchestra "to give it the appearance of a musical comedy". They also voiced disapproval of one Dawson player who started a fight, indicating that such beligerent behaviour didn't "cut the cheese" in the East.

The Dawson papers played down the humiliating defeat, and concentrated on hopes for the next game. "The chances on Monday are good for the Dawson team," proclaimed the *Yukon World*. "The men are in good spirits and great favorites, and made a splendid showing."

The report carried in the *Dawson News* was written by the team manager, Joseph Boyle, and was not cal-

culated to be free of bias. "It was a great game," wrote Boyle. "And the score was no criterion of it, nor of the relative merits of the two teams... Ottawa was continually offside, thus putting our boys to the disadvantage which always belongs to the side playing a clean game when large liberties are allowed the other side."

Boyle finished with the assurance that, "the interval of Saturday and Sunday will give the boys the needed opportunity to stretch their legs with every possibility that Monday's game will tell a different story."

But the so-called "lightning men from the North" fared even worse in the Monday match. The *Winnipeg Tribune* reported: "In one of the worst defeats handed out to a visiting team, the cup-holder defeated the gold diggers in the second and final game of the series by a score of 23-2".

Frank McGee, playing for the Ottawa team, set a record which has not been surpassed in professional hockey, scoring 14 goals, three of them within 90 seconds and another four within two minutes.

The *Telegram* heaped scorn on the Nuggets. "Never has such a consignment of hockey junk come over the metals of the CPR," it said — adding that the visitors played "as though they were under a general anaesthetic".

The Yukon papers could not down-play this loss, so they merely announced that the Ottawa team was "invincible", and sang the praises of those Dawson





players who had done better than the rest. Boyle wrote that after the first fifteen minutes of play, "Friday's game told on the Klondikers and they were 'all in' and Ottawa scored at will until time was called." But, he added on a note of optimism, "I fully expect the team yet to give a good account of itself in future games."

And indeed, the tour did not end on a note of total defeat. While the Yukoners lost their next four games in the Maritimes, they followed the losses with four wins. In the next twelve games in Ontario, Quebec, Manitoba and the United States they held their own — winning as many as they lost. Better yet, their share of the box office receipts pretty well paid for their long trip.

And the initial defeats could not still the hope in Yukon hearts. On 18 April 1905 the *Dawson News* reported: "The Klondike hockey team will tour the East and go after the Stanley Cup again next win-

ter. . . This is the declaration that Joe Boyle, manager of the Dawson team has made."

While Boyle did not follow through on his promise, it probably helped to contribute an element of intense competition to the home-town hockey games for some years after. ♦

Camilla Cornell is a freelance writer based in London, Ontario. Jan Kamienski is editorial page cartoonist for The Winnipeg Sun.



Stitching For God

Ukrainian Sacred Embroideries
Bring Colour to the Sanctuary



BY ROBERT B. KLYMASZ

*"... sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house:
glorify them in return with Your divine power..."*

— From the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

Bulbous, onion-shaped domes — so characteristic of Ukrainian churches — constitute one of the few distinctive architectural features that dot the prairie landscape. Inside each of these churches, often but not always directly below the dome, stands an altar where the supreme act of Christian worship takes place. Here too the faithful regularly beseech their God “to sanctify those who love the beauty of Your house” and to “glorify them in return”. To emphasize its importance, the altar is covered by a cloth, usually richly embroidered. Frequently, other embroideries are found nearby on processional banners and draped atop holy pictures and icons; often the priest’s ceremonial vestments (such as the alb and chasuble) are adorned with intricate needlework as well.

There are several outstanding collections of Ukrainian embroideries in Canada. Institutions like the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre in Winnipeg and the Ukrainian Museum of Canada in Saskatoon are justly proud of their embroidery collections. Generally, however, these are limited to the secular sphere of Ukrainian folk culture including costuming and such decorative household items as embroidered pillow covers; specimens and information relating to the religious sphere of the Ukrainian embroidery complex are often lacking although it can be assumed that the sacred sphere of the tradition must represent some of the finest and best samples of Ukrainian embroidery. Furthermore, the conservative nature of church and religion among the Ukrainians through the ages has made the art of sacred embroidery less subject to the whims of fashion and therefore more apt to preserve archaic features than secular, non-religious uses of embroidery. A political dimension to the story is the anti-religious policy of the ruling Communist Party in Soviet Ukraine where the subject of contemporary sacred embroideries is avoided, a situation that makes it impossible to entertain comparative studies in this area.

In view of what was felt to constitute a serious lack, the East European Programme of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, a division of the Canadian Museum of Civilization (formerly the National Museum of Man) in Ottawa-Hull, organized a research expedition in the summer of 1985 to locate and photodocument on site a representative cross-section of embroidered altar cloths and other religious embroideries as found in a select number of Ukrainian churches. Manitoba, with its large and varied Ukrainian population, offered a promising laboratory where the investigation could be launched with confidence. The project was also a way of saluting the millenium celebrations in 1988 of the official acceptance of Christianity by the Ukrainians and the other two East Slavic groups, the Russians and the Byelorussians. In the course of only a few weeks in the field, the project

succeeded in photographing altar coverings and related sacred embroideries in twenty-four churches scattered over fourteen communities in west central Manitoba; some of these churches stood in old, established rural centres, and others were new and distinctly urban in orientation. In the majority of cases, it was astonishing to learn that inventories of any sort were either non-existent or had never been attempted earlier. Churches whose collections of sacred embroideries were covered for the first time included Winnipeg’s two main, landmark Ukrainian cathedrals: Saints Vladimir and Olga (Catholic) and Holy Trinity (Orthodox). In most instances it was not possible to date or to determine who was the embroiderer; a few recent specimens were, however, dated and autographed by the embroiderer-donor; self-effacing anonymity rather than boastful egoism seems to have prevailed. Interestingly, two parish priests (in Gimli and Sifton) were found who had embroidered altar cloths and other sacred linens for their churches — indicating thereby that as far as the Ukrainian community is concerned, embroidery is not the exclusive domain of females.

In spite of the lack of hard data, it was clear that few, if any, of the specimens documented in the course of the field research represented needlework from the days of early Ukrainian settlement in Western Canada at the turn of the century: the struggle of pioneering in and adapting to a new physical and social environment was hardly conducive to the active retention of such leisurely pastimes as old world village embroidery. Nonetheless, records show that some Ukrainian immigrant women did use their embroidery skills to raise cash when necessary. In this regard, Claudia Helen Popowich, in her historical account entitled *To Serve Is to Love* (Toronto, 1971) about a religious order of Ukrainian Catholic nuns in Canada, the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate, several references are made to the ability of the nuns to use their talents at needlework as a way to raise funds in support of their projects in western Canada and elsewhere. In the late 1920s, multicultural handicraft festivals were organized by the Canadian Pacific Railway as a form of publicity; the handicraft displays invariably featured Ukrainian folk embroidery and were held in the railway’s famous hotels in various cities like Quebec, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and at Banff. After the Second World War, having survived its first half century in a new land, the Ukrainian community on the prairies and elsewhere in Canada turned to its folk arts with special vigour as a kind of renewable resource for the fostering of ethnic pride and differentiation. Like Easter eggs (called *pysanky* in Ukrainian) traditional Ukrainian folk embroidery was highly visible and widely acclaimed; in addition, Ukrainian cross-stitch began to appear as an ornamental motif in unusual and unexpected places: on

glassware ranging from tumblers to ashtrays, assorted ceramic items, printed fabrics, paper goods (napkins, for example), lamp shades, and elsewhere. Today the commercial popularity and seemingly indiscriminate proliferation of Ukrainian cross-stitch design annoys many enthusiasts for whom Ukrainian embroidery represents a cherished legacy from the past. The continuing popularity of this phenomenon can be studied at close hand during Canada's National Ukrainian Festival, held annually in Dauphin, Manitoba, in early August. There are other indications of a revived interest in Ukrainian embroidery: embroidery workshops, contests and displays are now common in many Ukrainian communities across Canada.

The motifs found on Ukrainian sacred embroideries in west central Manitoba can be divided into two main categories: geometric and floral. Anthropomorphic representations showing, for example, the figure of Jesus Christ or the Last Supper, are surprisingly rare. In the case of the latter, only one example was found in the course of the field investigations, and even it showed a strong dose of particularism: Ukrainian cross-stitch was featured on the table cloth, floor covering and wall decor. In modern times, geometric designs (such as squares and diamonds) expressed in cross-stitch have dominated the entire spectrum of traditional Ukrainian embroidery; and, to a certain degree, this trend has become emblematic of the Ukrainian community's strong sense of cultural distinctiveness. In keeping with this predilection for geometric ornamentation, even plant and animal motifs are geometrized. It is likely that both material and psychological reasons account for this pronounced development. The natural angularity of the warp-and-wool construction common to all fabrics in itself suggests the use of crosses and x's, the basis of cross-stitch; simultaneously the cross underlines the theme of Christian religiosity. Indeed, in the Ukrainian language, the word for a cross-stitch is *khrestyk*, meaning literally a small or little cross; with tens, hundreds and often more cross-stitches, the mechanistic repetition of the same stitch becomes a form of penance, not only a labour of love or religious fidelity.

The composition of many designs, the motifs and colours can be traced to a rich tradition with origins in Ukraine where individual villages developed their own patterns and where regional variation in embroidery styles and techniques provided an aesthetic dimension to the expression of local pride. Zoomorphic elements (spider-shapes, claws, antlers) and other motifs that reflect ancient connections with pagan cults, beliefs and practices still appear in sacred embroideries today. Archaic solar features include stars and satellites in free-floating formations. Vegetation forms include flowers, vines, clusters of grapes, stalks of wheat and the intriguing "tree of life". Representations of a

prehistoric, so-called fertility goddess are also in evidence. New features showing the adoption of Christian ways include such motifs as the chalice, a variety of cruciforms, and liturgical inscriptions. Modern day sentimentality also appears in the shape of bouquets, lovebirds, Valentine hearts, tulips, and other flowers such as the bleeding heart, daisy and carnation.

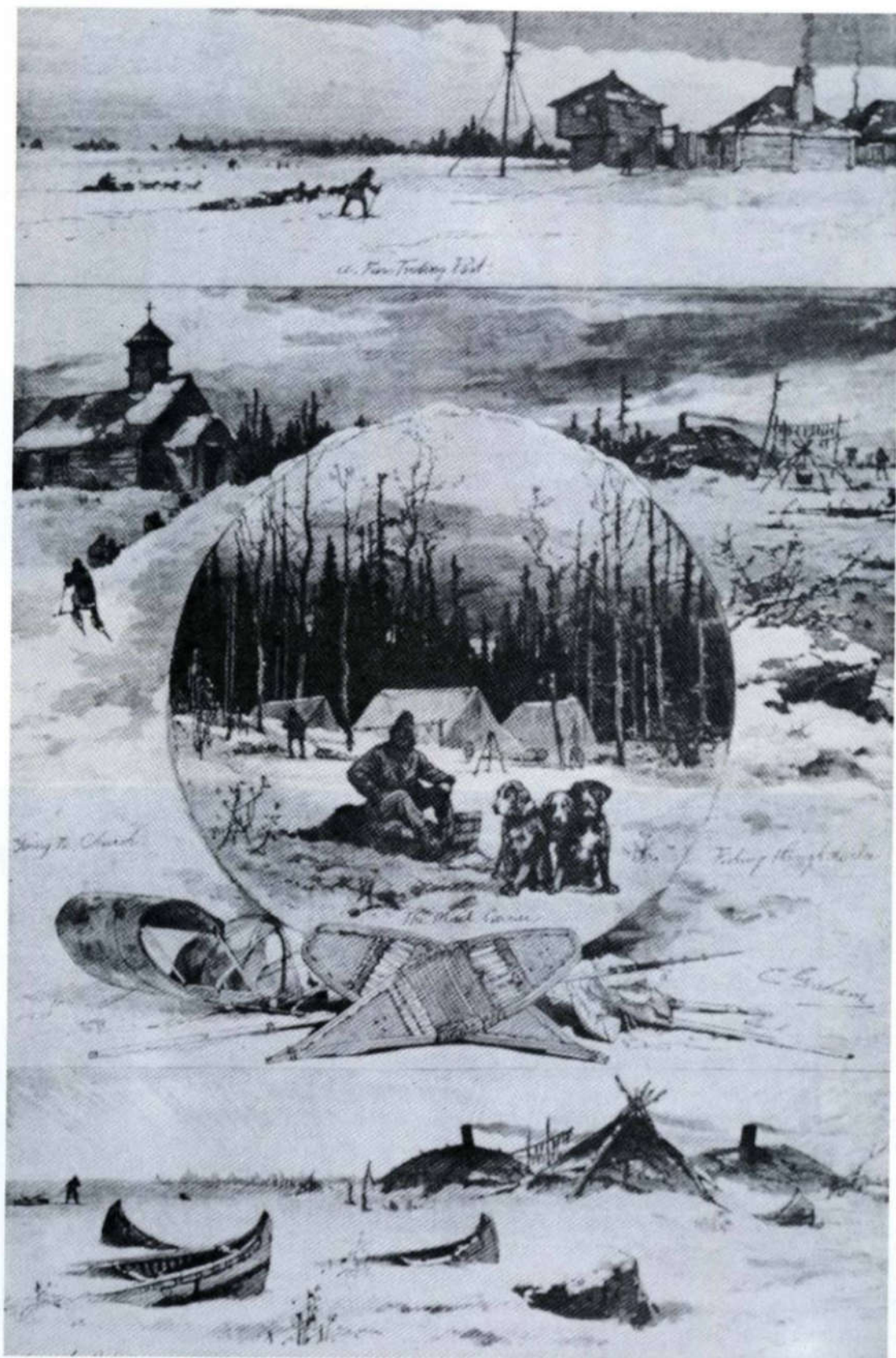
"The significance of most of the old symbols are forgotten and they are cherished for their beauty alone."

Red and black are the primary colours nowadays. Ivanna Zelska's authoritative guide to the techniques of *Ukrainian Embroidery* (Winnipeg, 1981, second revised edition) suggests that the colour red makes the design happy and bright and that black lends an air of dignity to the piece of embroidery; like Zelska many others believe that by emphasizing these two colours, red and black, the embroiderer will help preserve the national character of traditional Ukrainian needlework. In this way, then, ethnic distinctiveness rather than liturgical appropriateness provides the basis for choosing colour in Ukrainian religious embroidery in Manitoba (and other provinces in Canada) today. The significance of most of the old symbols are forgotten and they are cherished for their beauty alone. In a certain way, however, the magic talismanic function remains; the blend of pagan and Christian motifs has been forged into a striking ensign which on church altar and elsewhere the Ukrainian parish community in Manitoba uses to express its continued pride in and allegiance to its ancestral origins and religious roots.

Robert B. Klymasz is a curator, heading the East European Programme, Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa.







Winter scenes in the Northwest, Harper's Weekly, 1883.

William Kurelek, Multicultural Artist

By Abraham Arnold

William Kurelek, the Canadian artist who died suddenly in 1977 at the age of 50, was born on a farm in Alberta to Ukrainian immigrant parents. He was the eldest of four children and when he reached school age his parents moved with the family from Alberta to a dairy farm at Stonewall, Manitoba, just north of Winnipeg.

Bill Kurelek relates in his autobiography that he first became aware of being "ethnic" in a rather painful manner. When he entered grade one in a Manitoba country school at the age of seven he had some traumatic experiences because speaking Ukrainian was taboo at school, but that was the only language the family spoke at home. On the second day of school, when he spotted a fly on the class-room window, he called out: "*Mookha, mookha,*" and his brother John got up to try and catch it. They almost "caught it" from the teacher, who gave them an icy stare, while the rest of the class roared with laughter. Bill and his brother, red-faced, sank back into their seats. These childhood experiences did not give him a good feeling about his ethnic difference.

On the happy side, it was also in grade one that Bill first became aware of his own artistic ability. One day, confronting a boy whom he regarded as a rival in school activities, he said: "I bet I can draw a better train than you." The other boy shot back: "I bet you can't" and they each went off to draw a train. Relating this incident many years later Kurelek was too modest to claim that his drawing was better than the other boy's. He

recalled however that this incident helped him realize he was good at drawing and he noticed that he could attract favourable attention and admiration for his art.

At this early stage of self-discovery, however, his awareness of being "ethnic" remained separate from his self-recognition as an artist because of the painfulness of his early experience involving his ethnic background. In fact, his ethnic experiences continued to have a negative influence on him right through to his early teen years.

Eventually however he realized that he had to reject totally the negative feelings about his ethnicity which had developed to a large degree because of his father. Metro Kurelek was described by his son as the semi-literate son of a peasant in Ukraine. Metro arrived in Canada in the 1920s with the immediate memory of British sailors mistreating immigrants during the ocean crossing. At that time in the West there was a strong feeling against "foreigners" and against those who were non-British.

When he started school as a young boy Kurelek came under the influence of his English teachers and he began to wonder whether he was Ukrainian, or English-Canadian. During his high school years in Winnipeg, however, he also attended Ukrainian study classes at an Orthodox cathedral and began to acquire an appreciation of Ukrainian history. The priest who taught him, Father Mayevsky, had a strong influence on the teen-ager with artistic ambitions. This was due in large part to the fact that the priest encouraged him



Reproduction courtesy The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

The Polish Canadians: Christmas at Otter Lake, Quebec.

The Irish in Canada: The assassination of D'Arcy McGee.



Reproduction courtesy The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

Chanson a Reponse.



Reproduction courtesy The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

in his art. Kurelek got the idea from Father Mayevsky that he should undertake an epic illustration of the whole of Ukrainian history.

It might have been concluded that his dedication to the Ukrainian cause at that point meant that he had come to maturity as an ethnic artist, but Kurelek said of himself that it wasn't so. He went on to explain that upon entering university the intellectual stimulation of the academic world turned him into a rebel. Father Mayevsky's influence waned; he rejected family loyalties and his Ukrainian background.

After graduating from university Kurelek went to Toronto to study at the Ontario College of Art in 1949 and 1950 but he left the art school dissatisfied. He began to travel through Western Canada, down to Mexico, hoping to learn from the great Mexican artists; then to Europe.

During this period he occasionally returned to Ukrainian subject matter in his painting, as when he did a large canvas illustrating the story of Taras Bulba.

Kurelek was really going through a serious identity crisis at that time. All this dated back to his difficulties with his father who had virtually rejected him for wanting to pursue a career as an artist. Metro Kurelek did not believe that art was an appropriate occupation for a Ukrainian son. Bill underwent a severe emotional crisis and when he arrived in England he became a voluntary patient in a psychiatric hospital. He felt that his days as an ethnic artist were over and he found the English people so helpful that he decided to settle in England.

He went through some trying experiences as a psychiatric patient but he was also encouraged to indulge in the freest expression of himself in his painting and to begin writing his autobiography. Then came what Kurelek regarded as "the big turning point in his life" — his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. Later he came to the conclusion that "being a religious person is inextricably tied in with being an ethnic artist" and he said: "I came full circle back to ethnic art, not merely in conviction but in actual practice."

Kurelek remained in England for two more years; then he travelled through Europe and the Middle East before returning to Canada in 1959. He came to regard the Catholic faith as a world religion and began to consider himself a "citizen of the world".

To him this did not mean "being ashamed or disloyal to the nationality one was born into." It meant rather to "give equal respect to people of other origins and where possible to share one's heritage with people of other origins: taste each other's food, enjoy their music, learn a word of their language, if not all, read translations of their literature."

"This made me happier with my own background," he added, because "as long as I had plumped for Ukrainian loyalty alone I was bound to be disillusioned.

Ukrainians, whether as individuals or as a group, cannot be idealized for they are human beings and as such are just as prone to weaknesses as all other descendants of the first man."

In a 1964 exhibit honouring his parents, Kurelek began to present Ukrainian folk customs and for the first time one of his paintings was purchased by a Ukrainian Canadian. This painting depicted a Ukrainian Easter vigil in Alberta to which his parents had taken him when he was very young. With interest in his paintings beginning to grow in the Ukrainian community, Kurelek was surprised that one painting with an obviously Ukrainian subject, showing his father bidding farewell to his parents before a straw-thatched house in Bukovina, was bought by an English company for their board room.

In portraying his personal odyssey towards ethnic awareness Bill Kurelek said:

Ethnicity cannot be manufactured any more than morality can be legislated. It's there by birth or experience . . . There is no longer any excuse for anyone in this country to be ashamed for revealing his cultural background [because] we now have a multicultural society . . .

He also believed it to be a fallacy that one could attribute perfection or ideal qualities to one's own race or country. "There just ain't no such people or race," he declared.

While his religious paintings undoubtedly formed the largest part of his work, Kurelek also did hundreds of paintings reflecting his Ukrainian heritage and he made two trips to Ukraine, the last one two months before he died. In 1973 he began to plan a series of paintings on an ethnic group other than the Ukrainians. He decided to paint the Jews in Canada in appreciation of the help given him by art dealer Avrom Isaacs and the patronage of Jewish art collectors who were among the first to buy his paintings.

At this time he was consciously planning to paint a number of ethnic groups to reflect Canada's multicultural heritage. In 1975 he painted the Inuit of the Arctic after completing his Jewish series. In 1976 he did a set of paintings on the Irish in Canada and another series on the French Canadians in rural Quebec. The following year he did the Polish Canadians. He was planning a series on the German Canadians when he died.

With each series of paintings Kurelek wrote his own comments that were often quite revealing. For example, he said that one of his reasons for doing the paintings on the Jews was:

To do my bit in undoing some of the injustices Jews have suffered at the hands of Christians. That takes a little courage, I found, since there is still anti-Semitism around, sometimes just below the surface.

NOTES ON THE PAINTINGS

Christmas at Otter Lake, Quebec: This festive family gathering features the twelve dishes of Christmas, one of the traditions shared by Poles and Ukrainians (Page 52).

The Assassination of D'Arcy McGee: Kurelek admits to taking certain liberties with his painting of McGee's murder by a Fenian assassin at the door of the boarding house where the Irish-Canadian Father of Confederation lived in Sparks Street, Ottawa, 7 April 1868 (Page 52).

Chanson a Reponse: Kurelek loved to depict the special customs of the people he painted and he presented "Chanson a Reponse" as a "uniquely Quebecois form of rural home entertainment". Everyone is expected to contribute something: a jig, a joke, a story or a song (Page 53).

Yom Kippur Service: The artist visited an old synagogue in Toronto and used photographs of an early Winnipeg synagogue to make his picture of the synagogue on the Day of Atonement authentic (Page 56).

Ukrainian Pioneers' First Winter: Kurelek frequently did winter paintings showing the isolation of people against the stark snow-covered prairie landscape. Here we see a pioneer home in an ocean of snow (Page 56).

Kurelek's exhibition on the Irish in Canada went on display at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto in November 1976 and almost simultaneously his French Canada series "Les Gens de Charlevoix" was shown at a Quebec City gallery. The artist was concerned that his Irish exhibit received virtually no response from the large Irish community of Toronto and there was a similar lack of response to his French Canada series.

The Irish series did draw some criticism which suggested that Kurelek had presented certain unpleasant traits. The artist defended himself:

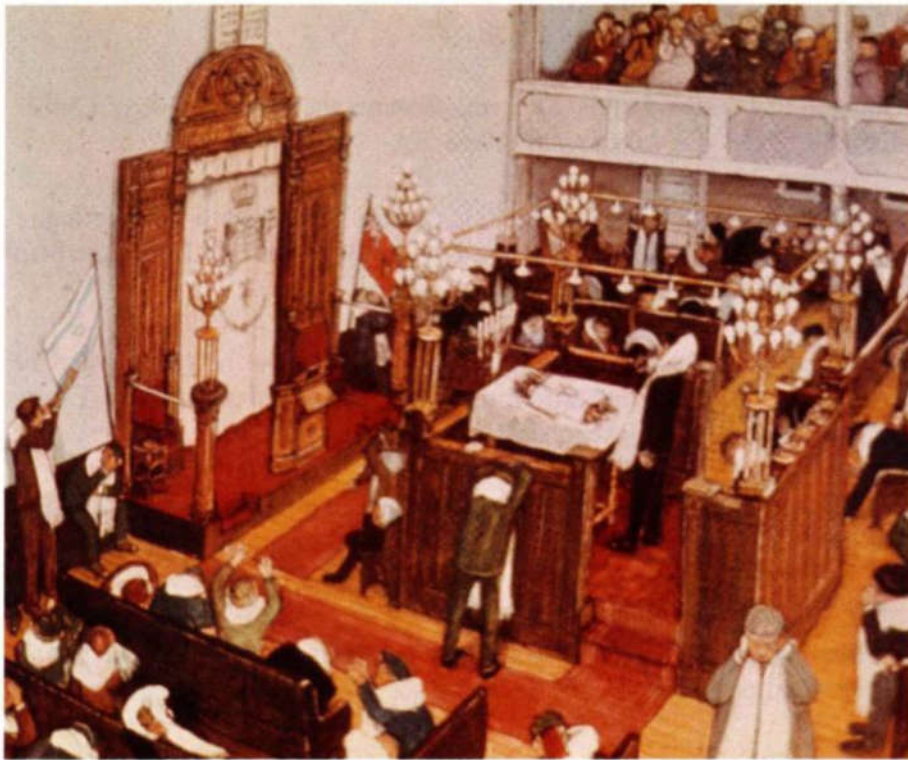
As an historical painter . . . I had to record the crises, the calamities, the hunger, thirst, sweat and toil of the people settling into an untamed country.

He felt that he had carefully balanced pleasant and unpleasant traits. He was also criticised on one or two occasions for presenting what appeared to some viewers as a negative caricature or stereotype of an ethnic character. Kurelek was quite sensitive to this type of criticism and it must be said that in the context of his total output depicting ethnic groups and aspects of Canadian life from all parts of the country, an apparent occasional lapse in character depiction can be forgiven.

The last ethnic group that Kurelek painted, the Polish Canadians, brought a very positive response. The series was purchased by the Polish Alliance of Canada and contributed to the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Hamilton.

In the summer of 1977 Kurelek accepted an invitation to visit Winnipeg in December of that year to give an illustrated presentation on ethnic history through art based on his own ethnic paintings. He was to address a joint meeting of the Manitoba Historical Society and the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada. He died a month before he was scheduled to fulfill that engagement.

Abraham Arnold was the co-author, with William Kurelek, of Jewish Life in Canada. He has written and lectured extensively on the late painter.



Reproduction courtesy The Isaacs Gallery, Toronto

The Jews in Canada: Yom Kippur Service.

Ukrainian Pioneers' First Winter.



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Last of the Curlews?

ESKIMO CURLEW A Vanishing Species?

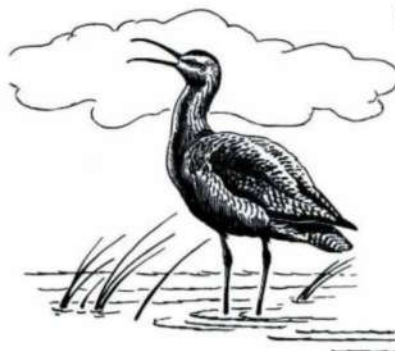
By J.B. Gollop, T.W. Barry and E.H. Iversen. Special Publication No. 17 of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Box 1121, Regina, Sask., S4P 3B4. 1986. 160 pp., illus. \$9.00.

Much has been written about the extinct passenger pigeon and great auk, and about the endangered whooping crane. They have blazed a vivid, meteoric trail across the wildlife-writing firmament, popular and technical. However, except for my novel, *Last of the Curlews*, of 30 years ago, there has been little written in modern times about the diminutive, enchanting Eskimo curlew which was once one of the western hemisphere's most abundant birds but has hovered on the brink of extinction since its abrupt decline about a century ago. The Eskimo curlew has not had a bad press; it has had no press at all.

For the first time, the full sad and epic story of the biology, 30,000-kilometre migration, history and slaughter of the Eskimo curlew is brought together in this superb little book by Canadian biologists Bernie Gollop and Tom Barry and Californian naturalist Eve Iversen.

When I wrote *Last of the Curlews* in 1954 it had been 22 years since the last one was shot and nine years since the last one had been seen, and ornithologists thought the species must be extinct. But it wasn't. One was seen on Galveston Island, Texas, in 1959 and others (or possibly the same one) on several springs following. One was shot and the skin preserved in Barbados in 1963. There were other brief sightings of one or sometimes two birds in the 1970s in the Northwest Territories, Ontario, Manitoba,

By Fred Bodsworth



T.M. Shortt

Saskatchewan, Massachusetts (after 57 years without a report), Alaska (after 101 years), and Guatemala. But the most exciting recent reports have been of a flock of 23 in Texas in 1981 (the largest number in 80 years) and six in the Northwest Territories in 1985. Some of these reports may be misidentifications, but they cannot all be. So the extinction of the Eskimo curlew, believed inevitable for almost 100 years, has apparently still not happened. But there is no doubt that it is on the verge of extinction still. Even a flock of 23, if this cheering report is true, can be wiped out in one storm. Whenever one is seen, we must still ask: was that the last one?

Eskimo Curlew is thorough. It has a section on field identification including photographs and diagrams more detailed than any field guide. Unfortunately the names of the three species of curlews across the bottom of figure 6, pages 20 and 21, are in wrong order. The caption should read; "Front views of, from left to right, Eskimo Curlew, Little Curlew and Whimbrel."

In its heyday the Eskimo curlew nested on tundra in the Northwest Territories, probably in Alaska, and possibly in eastern Siberia. Most of what we know about its nesting has come from Hudson's Bay Company trader Roderick MacFarlane who conducted study and collecting trips in the 1860s out of his post on the Anderson River 250 kilometres east of the Mackenzie River delta. MacFarlane found 38 nests of the species and sent his notes and a large number of eggs and skins to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. The last known Eskimo curlew nest was found by MacFarlane in 1866.

Since 1958 biologists of the Canadian Wildlife Service have searched the Anderson River area where MacFarlane found the Eskimo curlew an abundant nester, but have turned up no traces of the bird. In recent years they have used tape recordings of calls of the little curlew of Siberia, a close relative, which should bring response from Eskimo curlews if there are any within hearing, but this has also failed to uncover any. However curlews were seen at the Anderson River delta, 120 kilometres farther

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north, in six different years between 1955 and 1980.

The bulk of the book is in the form of quotations from hunters and other observers who wrote about the species during the last century when it was abundant. They are arranged geographically to trace the curlews' year from northern breeding grounds through fall migration to wintering grounds in southernmost South America and then north with the spring to the Arctic again. It was one of the longest bird migrations known.

From their northwestern breeding grounds they flew east to Labrador and then straight south over the Atlantic for 5,000 kilometres to northern South America in one of the most astounding over-sea bird migrations yet discovered. The Labrador-South America flight probably took 60 hours under even the most favourable weather conditions. They might have been able to alight on water for rest in good weather, but probably could feed little if at all on the ocean surface. (We now know there is a vast number of smaller songbirds that also make this incredible transoceanic flight; for them it is an 80 or 90 hour flight and it has to be nonstop because they are incapable of landing on water.) In some years large numbers of curlews were blown ashore on the eastern U.S. coast by easterly gales where they were met by a barrage of hunting guns and killed in thousands.

It was during one of these flights on 7 October 1492 that the Eskimo

curlew found a niche in history. Columbus recorded in his log on that date, his 65th at sea, that he saw immense flocks of birds passing overhead, and they were probably Eskimo curlews. Columbus recognized that they were landbirds, changed course to follow them, and five days later reached America.

After a flight overall of two to three months they reached the pampas of southern Argentina, their main wintering ground. On the spring flight north they followed a different path somewhere up the centre of South and North America. They were abundant in spring in Texas and Louisiana but their exact route from Argentina to the southern U.S. is unknown. They then flew northward through mid-western U.S. and Canada for another nesting season on the Arctic tundra.

People writing about the Eskimo curlew in its heyday refer repeatedly to its huge numbers. They wrote of "millions," of "mile-long flocks" that sounded like wind whistling through a ship's rigging, of "endless lines of birds flying swiftly by, day after day," that feeding flocks would cover 50 acres, making "the ground seem alive with them." But they were delicious eating, unwary and easily shot, and for most of their year wherever they flew they faced a gauntlet of guns, much of it from commercial gunners hunting for city markets. They were shipped to cities by the barrelfuls. 300 curlews to the barrel. There are reports of hunters shooting 100 of them before

breakfast. Flocks were so dense that as many as 28 were downed with a single shot. Sometimes during the spring hunt on the prairies wagons were filled with them, then dumped on the ground to rot so that the wagons could be filled again.

The result was foredoomed. The big flocks began to shrink in the 1880s, but the hunters just hunted harder, the slaughter went on, and barrelfuls continued to reach city markets into the middle 1890s. In the heavily hunted midwest, one Eskimo curlew was shot in Texas in 1902, one in Kansas also in 1902, two in Nebraska in 1911. And then no more.

This accusing little book leaves us with one final curlew enigma. The Eskimo curlew had some close associates, notably the golden plover, upland sandpiper and its larger curlew relative the whimbrel, which were shot almost as ruthlessly as the Eskimo curlew. Their numbers have recovered with the outlawing of shorebird hunting in this century, but the Eskimo curlew has not. We don't know why.

Fred Bodsworth, a lifelong naturalist and conservationist, is the author of the celebrated novel Last of the Curlews, published in 1954. He lives in Toronto.

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A Question of Blood

By Diane Payment

THE NEW PEOPLES Being and Becoming Métis in North America

Edited by Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S.H. Brown. University of Manitoba Press, Winnipeg, 1985. 266 pp., illus. \$25.00.

As the title of this collection of essays suggests, *The New Peoples* focuses primarily on the question of Métis origins and identity(ies) in Canada and the United States. What becomes increasingly evident when reading the articles is the variety of Métis traditions in North America.

Although it is possible to link the Chicots, Bois-Brûlés, Halfbreeds, Native "English" and Métis of the Great Lakes, the Mississippi and Red River in the first half of the nineteenth century, and of the Saskatchewan rivers, the Cypress Hills and Montana in the late nineteenth century, it is also clear that the American and Canadian settings fostered two very different histories in the twentieth century. There was more interaction between communities along the 49th parallel but the fact that the term Métis was largely unknown and the "nation" or group still not officially identified in the United States suggests a markedly different socio-political experience. As noted by Robert K. Thomas in the afterword: "In the United States, one must be legally Indian or white." But then if Canadians review the events of 1869-70 and 1885 and recall that it was only a few years ago, in 1982, that the Métis gained some official recognition as a distinct Native People, there was in

practice as much intolerance and assimilationist drive in Canada. The Chippewa and French-Cree of Turtle Mountain (North Dakota) and Rocky Boy (Montana) reserves may have lost much of their traditional Métis culture but they have a land base and official recognition, admittedly as Indians, not Métis. The tragedy of their numerous compatriots who could not obtain treaty is perhaps more tragic than the Canadian one, where Métis identity and culture was submerged but never eradicated.

The collection of articles by noted fur trade and Métis historians and anthropologists such as Jennifer Brown, Jacqueline Peterson, Sylvia Van Kirk, Irene Spry and John Foster and the interdisciplinary contributions of a linguist (John C. Crawford), and a cultural anthropologist (Ted Brasser) has resulted in a scholarly and comprehensive publication. It is evident from them and the other contributors that the study of the Métis implies an interdisciplinary approach. Since most Métis culture was recorded orally (for example the Métchif language, beliefs, music and folklore) and visually (various art forms), the fields of material culture and linguistics are an essential and perhaps primary component of Métis history. The exquisite plates in the Brasser article attest to a rich, complex and largely unknown record which offers glimpses of Métis traditions and culture in the broadest sense.

Rather than review each article specifically, I have chosen to comment more generally on the authors' perspectives and the scope of the material presented. "The First Conference on the Métis in North

America" in Chicago in 1981 laid the foundation for this book. Perhaps more important, it was dedicated to the "father" of Métis ethnohistory, Professor Marcel Giraud, who in 1935 convinced the reluctant professors at the Université de Paris that a study of the Métis in Western Canada was indeed a worthwhile topic. Ironically and unfortunately, Giraud's monumental survey history, published ten years later in 1945, made little impact in Canadian academic circles. French-Canadians were not particularly interested in their "métissage" and the ultramontane Roman Catholic hierarchy "detected a liberal, anti-clerical bias

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in his views". Except for a limited academic audience (*i.e.*, H. Innis and A.S. Morton) in English-speaking Canada, he remained virtually unknown and *Le Métis Canadien* gathered dust in a few select libraries. Professor Giraud regretted the subsequent "lack of opportunities and interest" in Canada; however research grants from American foundations were forthcoming. He embarked on a long-term study of French Louisiana (the most recent tome published in 1985). Giraud never returned to Canada. It was very fitting therefore (if also indicative of the Canadian "historical myopia" and the Anglo-Canadian bias of Western Canadian history) that American fur trade and Métis scholars should be the first to publicly acknowledge his contribution.

Not that Giraud's interpretations remain unchallenged after forty years. His "racial" views, a negative perception of "métissage" and a pessimistic outlook for the Métis have been effectively disputed. But the scope of his inquiry, his use of both documentary and oral sources (interviews conducted in various Métis communities in the midst of the "Depression" in 1935-36) were remarkable *for the time*. Marcel Giraud's views of the Métis reflect the prejudices of a society intolerant of "primitive" native peoples and convinced of its "superior civilization". Revolting and shocking in 1986... but some of our views and policies may not fare so well in forty years.

One of the important issues facing the editors of *The New Peoples* was the appropriate collective term to describe the "mixed-blood" societies. They chose *métis* with a lower-case "m", the original "racial" French term over the more "socio-cultural or political" capital "M" Métis. The lower-case usage was used by Giraud and other French cultural anthropologists in the late nineteenth century. But a review of the writings of Métis such as Riel, Schmidt and Charette and non-Métis such as Prud'homme, de Trémaudan, and Frémont suggests little use of this form in French-speaking Canada, among both Métis and non-Métis. The English form of Metis

(without the acute accent) is actually the more utilized in a socio-cultural and political context. To contribute further to the "disagreement" and "historical complexity" of the issue, I would argue that both *métis* (in French) and the hyphenated lower case half-breed are racial and pejorative, whereas Métis and Halfbreed (proper noun forms) express an ethnic affiliation and a people's self-identification. The alternative use of the term English or Anglophone mixed-blood, in the historical context of Halfbreeds, is somewhat artificial and too contemporary.

The variety of traditional appellations in Canada and the United States is illustrated by Trudy Nicks' account on the "Iroquois freemen" of Grande Cache (Alberta), David Edmunds' reference to the "French creoles" of the Old Northwest (Mississippi region) and John Crawford's synonymous use of Michif, French-Cree and "Chippewa" for the group at Turtle Mountain. Some of Verne Dusenberry's dejected Montana respondents called themselves "landless Indians".

Some very fruitful discussion and topics for further research can be gleaned from the twelve articles in *The New Peoples*. Although John Foster ("Suggestions and perspectives on the problem of Métis roots") states that "with the exception of the Riel and Goulet family, there was a lack of continuity between the activists of the free trade movement (1845-50) and those of the first Riel rising (1869-70)", a recent inquiry establishes a definite link between the activists of 1870 and 1885. The theme of interaction between Métis and Halfbreeds in the Red River Settlement, discussed by Irene Spry ("The Métis and mixed-bloods of Rupert's Land before 1870"), rekindles the debate of "sectarian and racial conflict" vs. "class or occupational alliances between the two groups". Perhaps more emphasis should be placed on the "divisive" role of the clergy and outsiders (particularly the Canadians) after 1850. One must also be wary, when associating families according to ethnic and religious affiliation.

There is evidence of alliances between the two native groups on the basis of place of residence, occupation and extended family at Red River between 1821 and 1870. The cross-marriages evidently resulted in social exchanges, cultural integration and new political and economic associations. For example Henry Hallet, the Halfbreed son of a former HBC officer, married a Métisse "crise", Catherine Parenteau, at the Protestant parish of St. John's in 1825, while his sister Marie married the prosperous Métis trader Louis Letendre (*dit* Batoche), at the Catholic parish of St. Boniface, the same year. Did this alliance influence the 1849 activist Louis Letendre's decision not to participate in the resistance of 1869-70? And what about Marie's unfortunate brother, William Hallet, who joined the anti-Riel Métis faction and subsequently committed suicide? Sylvia Van Kirk makes a very strong argument for "cultural ambivalence" in her article on the Alexander Ross family. The pro-Canadian, acculturated Halfbreed son, James, was unexpectedly "won over by Riel's appeal to racial unity" in 1869 but the stress of the events proved too much for him. Similarly, in the case of Ambroise Lépine,

Cover Story

Our cover painting, *Going to Mass* by Armand Paquette, depicts members of the community of Batoche, NWT, going to mass at Christmas 1896. The painting is used on the cover of this issue of *The Beaver* through the courtesy of Environment Canada, Parks.

Going to Mass is one of 16 commemorative postcards produced by Central Park Productions, 454 Edmonton Street, Winnipeg, Man. R3B 2M3.

André Nault and Baptiste Boucher, how did their "nationaliste canadien" heritage and political aspirations affect their militant actions of 1869-70?

Despite the "Red River myopia" raised by Trudy Nicks, it is evident that much work remains to be done on that varied community and surrounding parishes, their post-1870 "persistence and relocation" and the "parent" communities of Pembina, Cypress Hills and Montana.

The article "What is Michif" by John Crawford opens up a whole new field of interdisciplinary research — Métis languages. Crawford's transcriptions suggest an anglicized form of French and even Cree (with probably some Ojibwa or Saulteaux) at Turtle Mountain, while Robert Papen's investigations in Manitoba/Saskatchewan reveal-

ed a similar language structure (French nouns, Cree verbs and animate/inanimate gender distinctions) but a dominant French linguistic pattern. In some cases, only the structure of the Cree language was in evidence. The Bungi (Gaelic-Ojibwa) dialect of the Lower Settlement at Red River is another topic awaiting ethno-linguists.

The question of a distinct michif/métchif language based on French and Algonkian but predominantly "native" in structure, underlines the importance of an increased focus on the Amerindian traditions. For example, what were the cultural distinctions between the Métis/Halfbreeds of matriarchal Saulteaux ancestry (who predominated in the Great Lakes region) and the Métis/Halfbreeds of patriarchal Cree ancestry (who predominated

in the Red River/Saskatchewan districts) when they "met" at the Red River Settlement?

As one ponders over all these questions, "the compelling signs of a people, or perhaps several peoples, each with a history and cultural identity" projected by the editors becomes particularly significant.

The New Peoples did not forget the Métis in 1985. When so many rushed to publish accounts on Louis Riel and the "rebellion", too often reiterating traditional ethnocentric views and biases, Peterson and Brown sought to give new meaning and scope to "Being and Becoming Métis in North America".

Diane Payment is a historian with the Winnipeg office of Environment Canada, Parks.

INTO A NEW LAND

THEY SOUGHT A NEW WORLD
The Story of European Immigrants
to North America

Paintings and comment by William Kurelek, with additional text by Margaret Engelhart. Tundra Books, Montreal, 1985. 48 pp., illus. \$14.95.

This book presents 28 paintings by William Kurelek to illustrate the story of European immigrants who came to North America over more than a century. It should have a special attraction for young people, no matter which immigrant group they are descended from. What is also demonstrated is the universal appeal of many of the paintings Kurelek did on particular ethnocultural groups.

Nothing can overshadow Kurelek's vivid paintings of immigrant experience: crossing the Atlantic, doing the hard work in grain elevators, on railway lines and in lumber camps and tailor shops as well as in homestead farming; then there are the depictions of family life, festive gatherings, weddings and funerals.

By Abraham
Arnold

The difficulty with this book is that it does not live up to the cover which gives Kurelek's comments equal billing with his paintings and offers "additional text" by Margaret Engelhart. The fact is that the text is entirely by Engelhart with occasional quotes from Kurelek interspersed. Moreover the painting captions are limited to matter-of-fact one-liners whereas Kurelek often wrote detailed commentaries for his paintings. Some of these commentaries could well have been used to bring Kurelek's personal passion for his painting subjects into the book.

The paintings include 16 from *The Polish Canadians* (Tundra), four from *Jewish Life in Canada* (Hurtig) and four from *Fields* (Tundra); the rest are previously unpublished.

When children's book reviewer Tim Wynne-Jones wrote about this

book in the *Globe and Mail* recently he complained about the absence of "the voice of young William [Kurelek]" and said he was moved into "scurrying around to find Kurelek's earlier books." The Wynne-Jones review was accompanied by a photo of immigrants arriving at a prairie train station, from *Jewish Life in Canada*, a book which, ironically, never made it to the *G & M* book review section. The railway station is at Oungre, Saskatchewan, named for a Jewish Colonization Association official and the painting was originally a cover-photo for *The Beaver* (Autumn, 1975).

Ironies aside, *They Sought a New World* is still recommended, particularly for children.

Considering Kurelek's legacy of 2,000 paintings plus commentaries, manifestos, diaries and letters we may expect more of his pictures and words in the future.

Abraham Arnold was a friend and collaborator of the late William Kurelek.

A Legacy

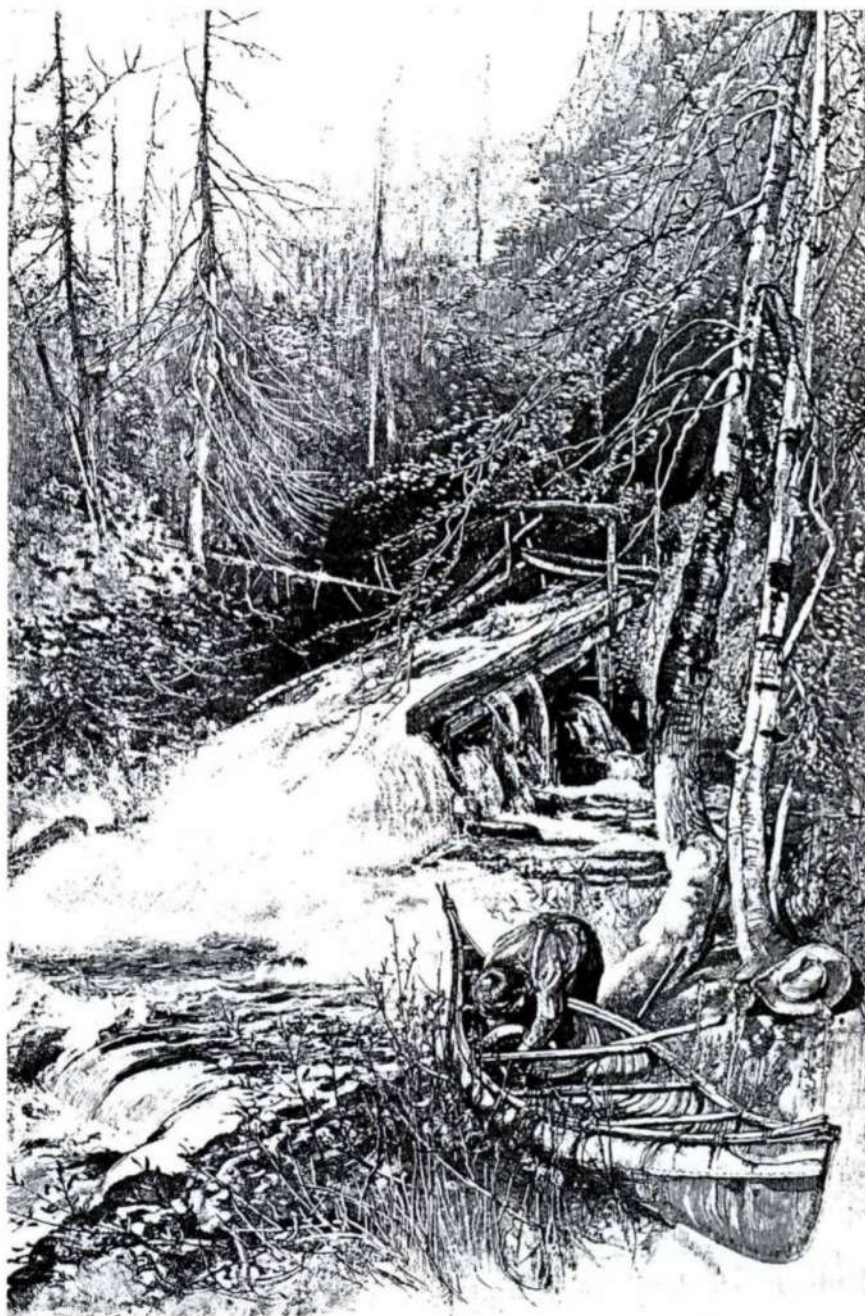
I read with great interest Janet Uren's article on the Dumoine River (*The Beaver*, August/September 1986). Recreational canoeing in the upper Ottawa Valley began in the late 1890s. The founders of Keewaydin Camp on Lake Temagami travelled by rail to Mattawa, by steamer part way up Lake Temiskaming, and by canoe to Lake Temagami. They outfitted in Mattawa and for more than fifty years employed people from Mattawa as guides, cooks, and caretakers.

Later in the 1930s, Camp Wabun followed the same tradition. Early on, Keewaydin Camp sent canoe trips from Temagami to Lake Dumoine via Grand Lake Victoria down the river and back to Mattawa. Wabun followed in the thirties.

Thus some canoeists share more than just the river with its earlier users. They share a direct legacy of canoeing skills and local knowledge about the environment passed to them by generations of guides from Mattawa, many of whom worked the Dumoine as loggers, trappers, and guides. The pry stroke, the wannigan, the carrying bar, and the tumpline are the most obvious inheritances. Less obvious, but more important gifts, are a love for the country and the travel, a sense of humour in the face of hardship, and a code of conduct summed up in the motto, "No matter where you go, there you are."

In the forty years prior to the 1970s recreational boom, guides from Mattawa led annual full summer Wabun and Keewaydin long trips on the Abitibi, Harricanaw, Broadback, Albany, Rupert, and Eastmain Rivers flowing to James Bay.

Downstream whitewater canoeing was certainly part of those trips, but it shared an equal role with long, tedious lake paddles, gruelling por-

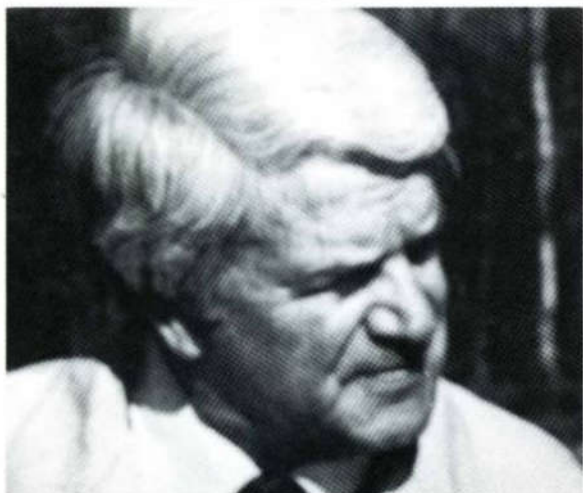


Forest stream and timber slide, from Picturesque Canada, Vol. II, 1882.

tages with loads of two months' food and the upstream work of poling, tracking, and wading. The food was bacon, beans, and bannock, the canoes of cedar and canvas, and the best clothes and boots of wool and leather. To some, these trips are but a fond teen-age memory, to others

they marked the beginning of a lifetime of canoeing in Canada's North. To most, they were an extension of the skills they learned from their guides on the Dumoine.

Jonathan Berger,
Philadelphia



Robert C. Wheeler
1913 - 1986

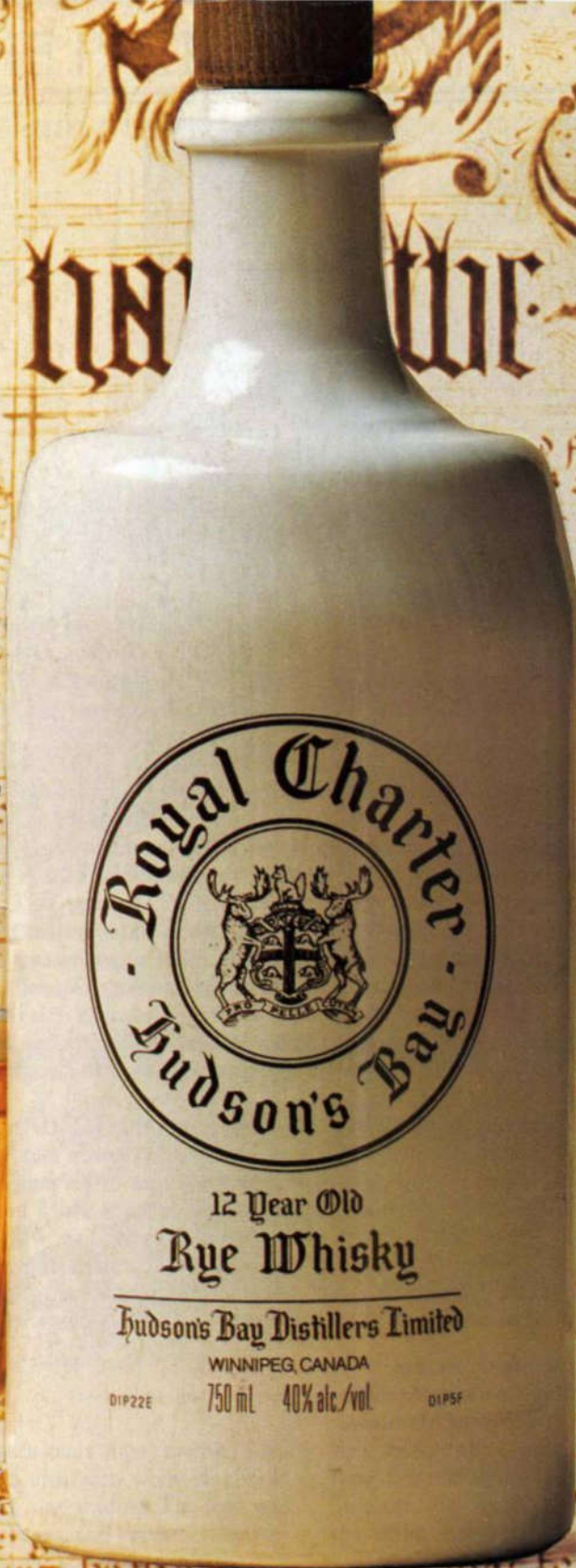
The death of Robert C. Wheeler of St. Paul, Minnesota, on 20 August at the age of 73 saddened many people on both sides of the international border. Born in Columbus, Ohio, his professional life was devoted to heritage except for three years when he served with the United States Army Engineers in Europe and North Africa during World War II. He retired in 1978 as Associate Director of the Minnesota Historical Society after 21 years of service.

As has happened before, Robert Wheeler was more interested in the history of the Canadian fur trade than many Canadians. He was determined, however, that Canadians and Americans should share their common fur trade heritage. It was he, among other members of the society, who brought to the attention of Manitobans that the great depot at York Factory on Hayes River should be preserved. He was one of the main supporters of the five International Fur Trade Conferences, the first being held in St. Paul in 1965. There 28 papers were given by such internationally known specialists as K. G. Davies, W. L. Morton, Grace Lee Nute, and Wilcomb E. Washburn. In 1963 he co-ordinated the first "white-water archaeology" conference ever held in the United States, which was sponsored by his society. Among other appointments he was co-ordinator of the Quetico-Superior Underwater Research Project, Chairman of the Advisory Council of Underwater Archaeology, and a member of the Science Advisory Board of American Heritage Research. His well-known field trips for members of the society ranged from Northern Canada to the Soviet Union. His curious mind and enthusiasm carried numerous projects including the Forest History Centre at Grand Rapids, Minnesota, editing *Minnesota History News*, acquisition of historic sites, and film making.

Robert Wheeler was not a man of centre stage. He believed in collegiality and practised it, and was at ease in all environments. It was this dignified, gentle, slow-spoken man who visited business men and scholars, on both sides of the border, inviting the former to sponsor one of his many heritage projects, and encouraging the latter to present their papers at one of the many conferences in which he was involved. No one who saw him in the old and elegant Rules Restaurant in London, as this writer has, would have associated him with the canoeman in the Quetico-Superior area enjoying the wilderness scenery of both countries. He was a family man who was greatly supported by his wife Ardis, daughter Kristi, and son Jonathan. This most approachable and accessible of men will be remembered by all who met him for his fervent support of fur trade history in all its aspects.

Shirlee Anne Smith, Keeper
Hudson's Bay Company Archives
Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

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